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The MOTHER BOOK

CENTRAL RESERVE

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1912

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FOREWORD

THE mother stands in the foreground as the guardian angel of the home. She is the dominant figure in home life. Her personality, her influence, her pervading presence, constitute a force for good not to be set down in cold type or weighed in earthly balances. If the mother is weak and incapable, if she is selfish and worldly, her children are the victims of one of Nature's fatal mistakes. Providentially, the mother is usually equal to the occasion and prepared for the emergency. The most frivolous girl, transformed by the supreme sacrifice of maternity, becomes a Madonna. Not only does the Madonna smile upon us from our walls; we meet her everywhere in life.

I stepped one day into a street car, crowded to its utmost capacity, at the hour when men and women were rushing homeward after a business day. The car stopped at a corner, and a woman entered, her baby in her arms. She was very young, and the little one not more than a month old. Something in her face, a vast flood of perfect happiness, lifted her into the glory we see in the ideal mother of the

ages. At once seats were offered her, and a wave of good feeling swept through the thronged car. The pride, the delight, the thankfulness in that youthful face made an impression on me so deep and enduring that it became a hallowed memory. Once, when visiting homes among the very poor, I crossed a tenement threshold where the little heads clustered close, where luxuries were none and comforts were few. A chorus from the children greeted me, and a faint voice from an inner room called me to come in. I stepped over the sill of the bare living room, and, in a chamber only large enough to accommodate a bed, a chair, and a bureau, I found a mother with a week-old infant lying in the arc of her arm. "She is my sixth baby," said the sweet-faced German woman. "Has not God been good to us?"

When one mentions motherhood, one spells that which is divine, that which, beginning with sacrifice, ends in coronation. In the palace, in the Avenue mansion, in the cabin of the mountaineer, and in the cottage of the peasant, the mother is ever the same — pervading, subtle, gracious, and strong. When she is not these, as I have said, she is exceptional. The childless wife often longs unspeakably for the blessing that has been withheld from her,

and there are women so large-hearted, trustful, and generous that they can mother orphaned children and accept the promise of God that they shall receive their wage from Him.

This book does not deal with the care of the nursery or with the physical aspect of maternity. It is called "The Mother Book" because every phase that affects the home has something to do with the mother. A man seldom rises higher than the standard set by his womankind, so that a chapter about the man of the house, as husband and father, is in order. The education of children of both sexes is largely conducted by teachers who are in constant touch with home and mother. The education to be given our daughters is vitally important at the present hour, when, more than ever, there is agitation in the air as to the political equality of the sexes. The several themes treated in the pages that follow have a distinct bearing on household life, and in the realm of the household the mother is queen. This book is, therefore, her book.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

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[redacted]

The Mother Book

I

THE MILLIONAIRE MOTHER

AMONG the fallacies that Time has corrected, none has more slowly loosened its hold on the general mind than the opinion that women of great wealth habitually neglect their children. Mothers in plain homes, making Bessie's frocks and patching Johnny's trousers with their own hands, putting up school luncheons for their little flock, and tucking their babies under the covers at nightfall, have felt a sense of pity for the small people who were left, as they imagined, wholly to the care of hirelings, and who hardly knew their mothers by sight.

In the old days, one constantly heard expressions of censure on the supposed derelictions of the fashionable mother, and it was taken as a matter of course that money meant fashion, and fashion

meant the Smart Set, and the Smart Set, in its turn, meant everything inimical to happy household life and the wise and tender bringing up of children.

Side by side with this impression marched another, equally unjust and equally difficult to remove. This was that the millionaire woman was invariably a reluctant mother, and that whoever else might have a full nursery, hers was limited to the minimum number, the two or three children who compose the ordinary American family.

The fact is that extremes meet, so far as the size of the family is concerned, in the opposite poles of society. In the beautiful home of the woman who at her pleasure may flit from one dwelling to another, from city to country, from New York to Lenox, from Pittsburgh to the sea, there is the merry sound of children's voices and the happy ring of children's feet, and the little ones follow one another into the world very much as the little ones do in the cottage of an English laborer or in a tenement room on the East Side of a swarming town like Manhattan.

If we have been at any time in danger of race suicide, I believe the tide has turned, and so far

from regarding the large family as an interruption and a hindrance, an obstacle to freedom, and a veiled calamity, the well-to-do woman of the period accepts maternity with thankfulness. She meets without complaint the restrictions of a sacrificial year, and lives joyfully for the sake, as one mother said to me, "of the little one that is coming."

The nursery in the home of the millionaire woman leaves nothing unsatisfied as to beauty and comfort. It is always a sunny room, and its furnishings, from the pictures on the walls to the low chairs, drawers, and tables easily within reach of little hands, are best described by the epithet suitable. There are usually several nurses, often one for each child, and they are under the general authority of a head nurse who has sometimes a hospital diploma; or, if not thus equipped for her position, is a woman of marked intelligence, gentleness, and dignity. To such a head nurse ideally adequate to the situation, a very large salary is paid. If she give complete satisfaction, prove herself worthy of confidence, and able to retain the adoring love of the children, she is looked upon as a treasure worth keeping at any price. She is the mother's lieutenant, her aide and confidante

in all that concerns the well-being of the children.

Frequently, when the little ones are emerging from infancy and approaching the initial stages of the schoolroom, the mother engages as nursery governess an accomplished kindergartner, who carries forward their first steps on the upward path of learning. This teacher is most carefully selected. The young matron has probably herself attended kindergarten lectures, and has taken lessons in mother play and other departments that prepare her for beginning the education of her little brood. Head nurse, kindergartner, nursery governess, are each and all subject to the inspection, surveillance, and continual criticism of the mother, who, while delegating many duties, shirks not a single one. During the infancy of her children, the mother is tethered to the nursery by a string measured off at intervals of designated hours when the tiny sovereign must be fed or otherwise personally conducted along his royal path of life.

The old haphazard methods of nursing a child whenever the child cried, of tossing a baby up and down or rocking it to and fro with the motion of a pendulum, of passing a baby from hand to hand, as if it were a curio, of waking it when it slept, that a visitor might see it smile—all these antique

procedures have passed away and forever gone out of existence in the millionaire nursery. Science is here the handmaid of wealth. Bathing, ventilation, food, rest, exercise, playtime, sleeping and waking—indeed, everything that has the least relation to the development of a growing child—are matters carried forward according to schedule. The results justify the means. Few children compare, in beauty, symmetry, and the charm of exuberant health, with the children whose happy lot has been cast in the pleasant environment of an American home of wealth.

The note of simplicity is in the ascendant in such a home. The children are not overdressed or early made blasé by an excess of toys, nor is the foundation for future dyspepsia laid by a superabundance of sweets. The unlimited candy, the surfeit of pastry, the hot biscuits, and pickles, that are too often the diet of children in modest households, where money is scarce, are entirely unknown to the children of the millionaire mother. She would be quite as likely to permit her children a taste of poison as to allow them to eat all the candy they chose at all hours of the day. The raiment worn by these little favorites of the gods is fine and dainty, comfortable and convenient, but is seldom

overloaded with rich lace and elaborate ruffles. Boys and girls are given plenty of liberty to romp and tumble about in the fresh air and are so dressed that freedom of movement is easy and unshackled. They are taught to ride their ponies, to drive, to swim, to row, to dance, to play basketball, and are early introduced to the whole range of athletic sports. Later, when the kindergarten age is passed, each successive stage of their education, from the schoolroom to the university, comes under the mother's scrupulous watch and ward.

Naturally—and in America inevitably—the chief burden of rearing children rests upon the mother. Our multi-millionaires are the busiest and the most engrossed of men, working more hours than their employees, and seldom getting much repose, except when at intervals they are sent away for an imperative holiday. The women of America find their occupation in the training of the next generation, and never do they bring more energy and intelligence to the task than when their children are to inherit vast fortunes and wide-reaching responsibilities.

The millionaire woman is not disturbed when her children are close together. It must be admitted that she has more reason for cheerful optimism

in this particular than her neighbor, who knows to the last hard-earned cent what it means to keep little feet shod and little coats and frocks in order, when the means are small and the bills of doctors and nurses are a source of wearing anxiety. The woman with money is relieved on one side of her life from the strain and fret that consume the fabric and tissue of women's souls when there is a never-ceasing endeavor to keep the wolf from the door.

Although the millionaire woman does not remit her conscientious oversight of her nursery, she sometimes leaves it for weeks or months in the care of others while she goes far afield to recuperate exhausted energies and insure for herself a new lease of health and strength. When the little mother in the plain home is ordered by her physician to take a rest cure, there is usually a grandmother, an Aunt Mary, a Cousin Clara, or an old school friend, who can come to her assistance, run the house, and look after the children until she returns.

Rich women have people belonging to them in precisely the same way, and if they resort to southern California, to Italy, to the breezy highlands of Scotland, for a needed outing, they leave their

children at home. They realize that children in the nursery may be left with comparative safety in good hands, and that later they may require mother tending and sympathy more than they do while they are babies.

There was a time when the children of wealth were in danger of being spoiled by having too much money to spend before they knew its value. The millionaire mother knows better today than to ruin her children by making them spendthrifts. They are taught how to use money by having the charge of an allowance, at first very small — perhaps only a few cents a week — increased as they grow older, until the youth or maiden has a monthly or quarterly sum regularly paid, out of which he or she must meet all ordinary expenses. The daughter of one of the richest men in America or the world said to a friend, when she received her quarterly check from her mother: "I might spend all this today if I liked, but no power on earth would get me any more or even help me out if I should, until the next quarter came around." The allowance, it may be observed, was not larger than that often given by a man of limited means to his pretty daughter or his son at college. This girl cleaned her gloves and put a new braid on her

skirt with as much reference to economy as if she had been earning her own living.

There does not seem to be much reason for fearing that the children of the millionaire woman will discredit her training or their country.

WHEN BABY CAME

When baby came she brought with her
A lot of freight the angels carried;
New joys within our breasts to stir,
New blessedness that long has tarried.
Her father felt his arm grow strong,
Another life on his depending;
Her mother's heart was full of song,
From dawn until the daylight's ending.

When baby came the purse was lean,
And small the home, the roof but lowly,
But wealth was brought by hands unseen,
And all the place grew bright and holy,
A wealth of love, of truth, of hope,
Those tiny fingers clasped, possessing
A secret, heaven had deigned to ope
And pour on us in rains of blessing.

When baby came, we proudly walked;
Our house was fairer than a palace,
And inly, as we thought and talked,
We sipped life's cup, a honeyed chalice.
We had no fear, we had no grief,
The millionaire was poor beside us;
So glad were we, beyond relief,
At this great gift that did betide us.

II

THE MOTHER WHO IS FOREIGN BORN

OUR country differs from every other on the globe in being the abode of various peoples gathered from every other country beneath the sun. We are new on this continent. Not so very long ago our forests resounded to the ax of the sturdy pioneer. Not so very long ago families were transported across mountain ranges and plains, from state to state, in those great covered wagons that bore whole families from the places already settled to the places awaiting settlement. They were well called prairie schooners. It has come to pass that our cities are cosmopolitan,—every city inclusive of certain quarters where foreign tongues are spoken, foreign faces encountered, and foreign ways persistent. Every race, every color, and every creed finds room under our flag.

Hence arise many of our problems. In the public school the children of the foreign-born learn to love the flag and are daily taught to salute it.

The foreign-born mother seldom loses the feeling that she is an exotic. Her children do not divine the homesickness that creeps over her and draws her back to the familiar shores, the familiar streets, the familiar sights and sounds of the land she left behind her. This homesickness grows upon her as her children, trained in American ways, have no sympathy with, as they have no understanding of, her desire to be back again in the old life. Swedes, Finns, Danes, Norwegians, bringing with them to the new home the qualities that make them good citizens, contribute constantly something very much worth while to the body politic. Our nation, heterogeneous in its elements, so assimilates all contributions that every little stream adds to the force of the mighty tide. It is when her young people are around her, with their interests, activities, and ways apart from those to which she was earlier accustomed, that the foreign-born mother realizes most intensely a certain aloofness. Perhaps she could speak no English when first she arrived in the alien land. Perhaps she was wise enough to buy a primer and study Eng-

lish with her little children. A Danish mother, outlining to me her system of acquiring English, which she speaks perfectly, with just that touch of idiom and accent that is like the suggestion of a fragrance, said that she studied every book with her children, from the time they learned to read until the time they were graduated from the high school. She kept the same pace that they did, and, with her quick mind and innate cleverness, in the later years she surpassed them. Their father died before the children were grown, and when she was talking to me her older young people were marrying and leaving her. There had swept across her a wave of yearning for the people and the scenes of her earlier day, and she was aware of a revolt against destiny. Should she carry out her purpose and return to spend her declining years in the village of her birth, it might well be that a counter-wave of desire would seize her and she would feel no rest until she was once more in Colorado.

A woman brought up in Holland was for years consumed by a ceaseless wish to return to Amsterdam. She was never able to fulfil her desire until, when her children were grown and her artist husband had acquired fame and fortune, she went back with her family for a long, leisurely visit.

To her there came a measure of disappointment and disenchantment. She had idealized in memory the conditions of home life, and found, to her dismay, that she did not fit in altogether smoothly and without protest where once everything had been perfect in her eyes. Her tall daughters and her college-bred sons were a puzzle to the old father and mother, who seemed a trifle afraid of the girls and did not altogether approve of the boys. Adjustments are everywhere confusing, and readjustments sometimes disturbing.

Among the most progressive of our women along lines of thought that now agitate the public mind are our foreign-born mothers. If they approve, for instance, of equal suffrage, the question concerns them so vitally that they not only agitate it but suffer it to agitate them. The women of the North are singularly fiery and enthusiastic, and never perfunctory in their advocacy of a political or moral theme. They far surpass in vehemence the women of the South—North and South here and in this connection referring to our European immigrant.

In the State of Washington, I know a Swiss mother whose large family of sons and daughters have not as yet outstripped their mother in patriot-

ism, love for the adopted home, and genuine thrift. Educated, as many Europeans are, in several languages at once, so that she can speak and read and think in four or five tongues, this mother has trained her children in the same admirable fashion. Every acquired language is an added tool and an added weapon. Among the assets for practical success in bread-winning, few acquirements equal that of familiar acquaintance with more tongues than one. The foreign-born mother is derelict to duty if she permits her children to learn English only, while they know nothing whatever of the tongue into which she was born.

We are by way of imagining that English is the dominant language of the entire world. Spanish and German, French and Italian, are also widely spoken, and the two former in a practical sense are very valuable to young men when they launch on the sea of business. Just as, in the days when we depended on candles for illumination, one candle shed less light than two, and two gave less light than five, so every language thoroughly made one's own is an added factor, another light-bringer, and another helper, in practical life.

The foreign-born mother in the ordinary home has both a craving and a talent for domesticity.

She clings to tradition; she has old family recipes and does everything in the fashion she was taught by her mother, who, in her turn, followed the counsels of the women who went before her. She is not one of the mothers who seek their pleasures far afield, and, indeed, she boasts a little of her fondness for being always beside the hearth.

THE STAY-AT-HOME

I must abide beside the stuff,
  Must care for homely things,
While others rove to distant lands,
  And cross the main as if with wings.
My busy hands are seldom still,
  I keep the house for those who roam;
And just because it is God's will,
  I am a quiet stay-at-home.

When evening falls you would not know
  That I had swept and baked and brewed;
Upon the hearth the blessing falls
  Of most untroubled solitude.
But beds for weary heads are made,
  And daintily the board is spread;
For mine own dear ones there I wait
  To break with love their daily bread.

It well may hap some coming day
That, looking back, my kin shall bless,
With eyes grown dim, my watchful thought,
My ceaseless, brooding gentleness.
E'en now I reap as I have sown,
For happily my darlings come,
And arms of tender love are thrown
Around their little stay-at-home.

III

THE MOTHER IN THE TENEMENT

UNLESS you have known her with her life of makeshifts and privations, her hard struggle to make ends meet, and her satisfaction in seeing her children grow up from babyhood to wage-earning, her pride in them—precisely the pride all mothers feel—you cannot estimate her at her wonderful valuation. She was married when a mere girl, who had been binding shoes, stitching gloves, working in a tobacco factory, or making paper boxes. The young man she married was as poor as herself, but he had had a promotion and wanted a home, and the two, without much knowledge of thrift on either side, pooled their lack of knowledge and bravely set forth on the road. It has sometimes happened that two thus starting together have, as the common

phrase is, made good in the line of worldly advancement. This is rather more likely to be true if they have been of foreign birth than if they are American-born. There are Italians, Germans, Russians, and Syrians in this country who started life in the tenement thirty years ago, and today have houses not unlike the palace that Aladdin built for his bride. They have been able for a long time to live with extreme frugality and have availed themselves of opportunities that have slipped unnoticed past more luxurious neighbors. Is luxurious the right word to apply in this connection? Possibly not. Luxury, however, is a relative term, and when the husband's weekly earnings are anticipated because the wife has not a single particle of forecast; when the delicatessen store and the bakery furnish the table and the corner grocery encourages a weekly or monthly account, the family does not get on. When the man cannot pass a saloon without yielding to its alluring fascination, there is trouble of a kind that the wife of the tenement too often bears in mute resignation.

The children of the tenement—by which term is meant a small room or apartment—turn to the mother and not to the father as the person in

authority. An ordinary apartment in the poorest quarters of a large city includes from three to five rooms. One of these has neither light nor air, except as received from the others. Here families, consisting of father, mother, and eight or ten children, dwell, and not infrequently the family income is augmented by one or two boarders. I once said to the daughter of a hard-working tenement mother, "Why do you sit up so late every night, when you have to rise so early in the morning?" The girl was obliged to be at her place in the factory at seven o'clock in Summer and Winter, and, fortunately for herself, had a half-mile walk to and from her home. This may have been her salvation. She looked pale and haggard, but a blush sprang to her white cheek as she enlightened me, the density of my ignorance of the situation no doubt seeming most appalling. "I cannot go to bed until everybody is in. Our mattresses are in a pile, and until my father and brothers are in for the night, I cannot get mine to lay upon the floor."

Another daughter of the tenement once said to me, apropos of a discussion about large family versus small: "When you live in a cellar, and there is seldom enough food to go round, and your

father drinks, and your mother cries when there is no money to buy coal, there isn't much to be said in favor of a large family. There were eleven of us." Yet, at the time this girl spoke to me, six of the eleven were earning good wages; one of them had taken honors in the public school and meant to go to college, working his way; and as for the girl herself, in a dainty shirtwaist and a well-cut skirt, she looked as graceful and attractive as any one of the society girls who came to the Settlement where I met her.

The mother of the tenement brings up her children with attention to simple rules of conduct. They are usually obedient and usually affectionate, though her discipline is often of the most primitive order and her temper may flame up on slight provocation and be emphasized in a word and a blow. The little children who come from these crowded nests, where the mother-bird has all to do in her power to provide them shelter, have a way of ducking quickly, raising the arm to protect the head, and showing in this dumb fashion their fear of punishment. As they grow older, they do not resent these mother-methods any more than the cubs of the lioness resent a pat from a savage paw. On the contrary, they are very loyal to the mother.

After the legal age, when the boys and girls begin to bring home their weekly stipend, the whole amount is given to the mother, and she uses it for the advantage of the family, giving to boy or girl a certain sum for car-fare and personal use. She buys her clothing; if she has a sewing machine, makes what her girls wear, and many a time sits up very late at night to wash and iron the shirt-waists and skirts in which her girls shall appear fresh and dainty the next morning.

A Hebrew mother or a Romanist brings up her children carefully in the tenets of her creed. A Protestant mother is far less careful, as a rule, of the religious side of a child's education, among the very poor. This chapter has nothing to do with the comfortable middle class, to which the great majority of our people belong. It is not descriptive of the homes of well-to-do mechanics and operatives who are able to cut their coat according to their cloth and ask no odds of any one. These people are the bone and sinew of the land. Neither from the class who consider one million genteel poverty, nor from the other class who forever wage a losing conflict with the wolf at the door, does this Republic draw its magnificent strength. The valiant mothers of America are neither poor nor

rich, in the acceptation of those convenient adjectives. They are the wives of farmers, merchants, clerks, workingmen, professional men, men in the army and navy, and men in every walk of life who adjust their expenses with some relation to a margin rather slight and an honorable balance sheet at the end of the year.

The tenement mother—all honor to her!—watches over her children's morals and safeguards her daughters as zealously and prudently as mother-love may. Circumstances are against her. There are revelations made to little children of tender age, in the life of the tenement, 'gainst which no maternal vigilance can guard. It is not within her power to throw about a son or daughter such shielding care as is easy and natural when there is no battle in array for daily bread; but she does her best, and her best is very good.

The loyalty of the son to the mother, in the life of the tenement, is one of the most marvelous and beautiful facts of human existence. As the boy makes early acquaintance with trials, hardships, and difficulties, he becomes his mother's champion. In these days he probably belongs not alone to a certain gang in which he may be a leader, but to a band of Scouts or a Boys' Brigade. In these latter

organization he is systematically trained in military virtues, first aid to the injured, woodcraft, and chivalry. Long before these organizations were thought of, the sons of the tenement revered their mothers, were ready to fight for them, and cherished in their hearts an undying resolve to toil for them in future years. Such a lad, selling newspapers, running on errands, working out of school whenever he could, finally, some years ago, before motor cars were the fashion, was engaged by a country doctor to drive him about. The boy privately decided that he would, in due time, become a physician himself. His widowed mother took in fine washing and ironing and thus earned her livelihood. The boy said to himself: "The day shall come when my mother shall have some one to wash for her; when she shall wear a silk gown and ride in her own carriage." The boy was one of those who saw visions and dreamed dreams. In time he accomplished all that he intended. Step by step, with incredible painstaking, he reached his goal. The day came when he had the keen eye and the steady hand and the wondrous art of an accomplished surgeon. He fulfilled his prophecy, and, in her older years, the mother of his adoration, the mother who had so sacrificed for her dear son,

dressed in silk, rode in her carriage, and directed her maids.

THE TROUBLESOME BABY

The little ones cling to the mother,
With kisses that softly fall,
But somehow the troublesome baby
Is nearest her heart of all, —
Ill, and fretful, and small,
But dearest to mother of all.

The neighbors wonder and pity,
Hearing its querulous cry.
"She is losing her youth and beauty,"
Say friends as they pass her by:
"Well were the babe to die,
And the mother have rest," they sigh.

But over the wee white cradle,
Her soft eyes full of prayer,
Bendeth the weary mother;
And never was face so fair,
Pale, and tired with care, —
But the glory of love is there!

Rosy, and round, and dimpled,
Dewy with childish sleep,
She tucks in her other darlings,
Whom angels watch and keep.
Ah, if a darker angel
Anear this treasure creep!

Bless thee, beautiful mother!
Thy heart hath a place for all, —
Room for the joys and the sorrows,
However fast they fall;
Room for the baby small,
That may love thee better than all.

IV

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

PASSED a group of young girls on the street this morning, on my way to the post-office. They were at the winsome age that lies between twelve and fifteen, that sweet border land between childhood and womanhood — the place where the brook and river meet. Yesterday I spent several hours in the company of a young mother whose only daughter, her first-born, is a charming little maiden, not yet two years old. The other day I met a beautiful matron who talked to me about her little girl, just out of the kindergarten, and just ready to take her first plunge into the social world of a large primary school. Among my friends and neighbors there are many mothers whose daughters have left the classroom and are fairly launched on the business of life, as daugh-

ters at home, young women in business, or young women in professions. Here and there are mothers, grown old, who have daughters approaching middle life. The daughter is ever an important figure, a personality of consequence.

From the moment that the tiny woman child lies in your arms, she is, dear mother, your other self. Long before she emerges from the rudimentary stage of tiny infancy, you begin to impress her character by your own. If you are serene and self-restrained; if you are happy; if your spiritual nature responds to the call of the infinite, little by little, inevitably, you shape for good the future of your daughter. More than that, you shape the woman she will be. In the very cradle there are foreshadowings of the future woman. It is perfectly true that, during the first ten years of life, little boys and girls have a thousand things in common. They should study and play together, while both should have the same freedom for physical development. Yet, from the beginning, there are subtle differences of sex, and the girl holds in herself the germ of the coming woman, and the boy in himself the germ of the coming man.

Not long ago, in reading again "The Life and

Letters of Louisa Alcott," it was borne in upon me that the multiplied thousands who have read "Little Women" owe a debt beyond earthly reckoning to Abba May Alcott, the mother of the famous author. The Alcott household was tried by adversity, Mr. Alcott being an idealist, who never had the faculty of making money. The mother led a strenuous and anxious life, but both she and their father did for their children much that could not have been purchased by the income of a millionaire. The children were encouraged to keep a diary, and it was understood that at any time their parents were privileged to look over the little story of the passing day. Mrs. Alcott seldom reproved her active, enthusiastic Louisa in words, but the child often found little gentle suggestions about conduct and bright little encouragements, in notes from her mother left between the pages of the journal. Shall I quote a specimen or two? The first is a little birthday letter:

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL: Will you accept this doll from me on your seventh birthday? She will be a quiet playmate for my active Louisa for seven years more. Be a kind mama and love her for my sake.

YOUR MOTHER.

The next was written when the child was ten:

DEAR DAUGHTER: Your tenth birthday has arrived. May it be a happy one, and on each returning birthday may you feel new strength and resolution to be gentle with sisters, obedient to parents, loving to every one, and happy in yourself.

I give you the pencil case I promised, for I have observed that you are fond of writing, and wish to encourage the habit.

Go on trying, dear, and each day it will be easier to be and do good. You must help yourself, for the cause of your troubles is in yourself; and patience and courage only will make you what mother prays to see you — her good and happy child.

YOUR MOTHER.

As the little girl grew older, and felt the tumultuous tides of her life rushing in upon her, she was sometimes restless and depressed. Always impulsive, she made mistakes, said things that she regretted, and ate the bread of penitence. The mother divined the daughter's moods, and knew by love's intuition when to speak and when to be silent. If we mothers could only possess that precious gift, how much good we might do, from how many errors we might be saved! One little note reads: "My dearest Louy, I often peep into your diary, hoping to see some record of more happy days. 'Hope and keep busy,' dear daugh-

ter, and in all perplexity or trouble come freely to your mother."

In response to this maternal message, Louisa wrote in her diary: "Dear mother, you *shall* see more happy days, and I *will* come to you with my worries, for you are the best woman in the world."

Few working mottoes are better adapted for every-day use than the simple one that Louisa adopted and made the keynote of her brave and useful years, "Hope and keep busy."

We all agree, do we not, that the mother ought to be the daughter's chief confidante? Whenever mother and daughter are in complete understanding, one with the other, this relation exists, and it makes a harmony so unflawed and beautiful that few friendships compare with it. Those who are united by ties of blood ought certainly to be friends. Frequently, mother and daughter are like the old simile of two roses on one stem. Often their sympathy is so swift and full that it is like a song without words; but there are strange antagonisms, due to contrasting temperaments, or to mistakes at the outset, or to miseducation, that alienate those who should be fast held in bonds of deepest affection. There are daughters who confide in any one rather than in their mother, and there are

mothers who either seek in vain the confidence a daughter withholds or, still worse, walk through life blindfold, never dreaming what they have missed.

The world over, the sentiment of love for the mother springs in the heart of the race, and in the crises of experience sons and daughters turn yearningly to her who bore them. She who would be to her daughter a guardian angel, a pattern, and a cherished friend, all the way through the several stages of life, must be strong, generous, wise, and self-forgetting; may sometimes be frivolous; must enter into her daughter's trials and triumphs—must, in short, be a good comrade as well as a watchful caretaker. She may be like a sister, yet always share the daughter's absolute confidence.

Frances Willard, whose memory is forever laurel-wreathed, used to call her mother Saint Courageous. She paid that dear mother a tribute that had in it no trace of exaggeration, though it was written in the superlative:

"My mother had courage of intellect, of heart, and physical courage as well, beyond any other woman that I have known. 'We are saved by hope,' was the motto of her life. 'This is our part, and all the part we have,' she used to say. 'The

existence and love of God are the pulse of our being, whether we live or die.'"

Speaking of her mother's methods in the training of her children, Miss Willard left this suggestive testimony. I wish every mother who has little ones around her would think it over:

"She never expected us to be bad children. I never heard her refer to total depravity as our inevitable heritage; she always said, when we were cross, 'Where is my bright little girl that is so pleasant to have about? Somebody must have taken her away and left this little creature here, who has a scowl upon her face.' She always expected us to do well; and, after a long and beautiful life, when she was sitting in sunshine, calm and sweet, at eighty-seven years of age, she said to one who asked what she would have done differently as a mother, if she had her life to live over again, 'I should blame less and praise more.'"

There is no necessity for an "awkward age" in the daughter's upgrowing. Transition periods are trying. The daughter who rapidly shoots from the dimpled roundness of the child into the slimness and angularity of the young girl may be sensitive about her size or her height, and so may her companion be, who is conscious that she is freckled, or

fat, or anything else that makes her conspicuous. A superbly beautiful woman told me that as a rapidly growing girl she was clumsy and self-conscious, because she was aware that her mother and elder sisters were ashamed of her. She overheard her mother lamenting one day that M. was so big and unpresentable, with the result that she stumbled over footstools and knocked against spider-legged tables, as a matter of course, when her mother's eye was upon her. Have patience with the growing girl. Do nothing to develop in her a fear that she is not making the right impression. Let her be trained in the graceful management of her body. Omit nothing that will prepare her to accept in glowing health and strength the future burdens of the feminine organization. That organization, though delicate as the finest steel, should be keen and strong and elastic, and, that it may be so, the mother of the growing girl should be vigilant in her outlook for her daughter's health and vigor. Do not suffer school work or premature entrance into society to sap the springs of energy and dry up the sources of vitality.

To some mothers, daughters remain children, in the sense of being kept in leading strings, long after the daughters have arrived at womanhood. "My

mother never felt that I could be trusted to choose a hat or a gown for myself," said a woman to me the other day, "and I was nearly thirty years old before I ever thought of making a visit, accepting an invitation, or doing the least thing, without asking her consent. She repressed initiative on the part of her unmarried daughters. My father, on one of my birthdays, gave me a sum of money to spend as I wished. I united with a friend in the purchase of tickets for philharmonic rehearsals that season, and, although I was twenty-four, my mother cried about it and scarcely spoke to me for a week."

Some may think this an extreme case, but I happen personally to know women in their forties who seldom take a step without obtaining permission from an imperious mother in her seventies. The mother has been so dominant throughout life that her daughters have withered instead of expanded beneath her gentle, unruffled, and tyrannical sweetness.

Despotism of the mother, though it be born of affection, is as fatal to independence in the daughter as harshness and severity, born of dislike, could possibly be. To every human soul there dawns a day when it must answer for itself. To me, few

sights are more pitiable than that of a helpless, infantile, undeveloped woman who is unfit to meet changes of fortune because she has been carried over every hard place and never allowed to judge and act for herself. The crippled feet of the little Chinese lady—feet on which she must totter, because she was born to a lofty station and may not walk as common people do—are not half so shocking to behold as the crippled wills and faltering footsteps of daughters who have been taught from birth to rely on others, and who can by no means stand squarely on their own feet.

Where the grown-up daughter is sufficiently strong to hold her own and strive for freedom successfully, there may result irritation and permanent misunderstanding. Occasionally alienation of love and separation of interest follow such antagonism. In the ideal home life, there must be liberty of conscience for all concerned. When the grown-up daughter is out in the world, supporting herself, she is less subject to petty bickerings than when she stays at home, remaining to her mother merely a child, long after childhood is over. Yet this is not a plea to the daughter to leave her home, if she may by any means find her higher duty and happiness there. There are mothers and mothers—

and, indeed, there are daughters and daughters. In the perfect home, no question of rights to be given or taken raises its menacing hand. On the contrary, sympathy and unselfishness prevail, and the disposition to be curbed on both sides is that of self-sacrifice.

MOTHER'S COMING HOME

Sweep every corner of the house, make every window shine,
Loop up the snowy curtains, bring bloom of flower and vine;
Let every face be bright and glad, and all of us be gay,
For mother dear is coming home, she's coming home today.

She seldom goes away, you know: we always find her here;
She meets us smiling at the door; she greets us; never fear
That mother will forget the word that pays for toil and fret;
I tell you, friends, that mother is the biggest comfort yet.

Our doctor called her "tuckered out"; she "needed rest a spell":
And so we let her toddle off to Grandpa's; now she's well,
And *how* we've missed her, how we've longed to see her back once more!
We'll tell her just the minute that she enters yonder door.
She's likely very tired; so we'll have a cup of tea at once;
My tea is sure to please her, for I am not quite a dunce;
I make it as she taught me, with water freshly boiled,
And I never *steep* the tea, my dear; it surely would be spoiled.

The neighbors know she's coming home, and one by one they'll call;
She'll have a laugh, a merry jest, a hand-clasp for them all.
We have nice neighbors in this town; we love them, old and young,
Our neighbors who salute us in a pleasant friendly tongue.

Dear me, I'll not stand chatting here; I've far too much to do!
When mother comes, I want that she should find the work quite through.
What happy eyes we'll shut to-night; how soft will be the bed!
And mother safe at home again, her days of absence sped.

V

LOVE—THE CORNER-STONE

EVERYTHING worth having in life is built on love. This is the corner-stone. Love and loyalty transfigure the plainest home. A home in which there is neither love nor faith is more wretched than a prison. The topic should interest the whole family. Not one in the circle can be left out of consideration when we are thinking of love. It enfolds the cradle with protecting arms; it shelters old age from cold and loneliness; it gives courage and strength to the bread-winner, and enables the tired mother to sing as she goes about her daily tasks. Yet perhaps it is to the young people at the parting of the ways that love presents itself as most vital and alluring.

One day I was a guest at a home gathering, inclusive of widely scattered clans. There were

among them gray-haired men and women, who greeted one another warmly, after the lapse of years, and began at once to be reminiscent, in the fashion of those who have been separated by time and space. I was an onlooker, not of the kindred; yet I was keenly interested in observing the various groups and in hearing the talk that ebbed and flowed around me, like the going and coming of the tide. Presently I found myself the center of a group that closed in around my chair and began to consult me, as if I were a high priestess of fate. This group of cousins and friends was wholly composed of girls and men in their twenties or younger. There was, as it surprised me a little to note, a much larger number of men than of girls. Two or three of these were in business; several were college students; one was a sailor, and one was devoting his energies with jealous consecration to music. We were somehow left together there, owing to the absorption of the rest in a temporary solitude. We might have been on a desert island, without a sign of a ship on the horizon, so entirely intimate and personal was our talk and so little was it interrupted by any one else in the company. The secret of our discussion may be disclosed in two words—loyalty and love.

"They started off earlier fifty years ago," remarked an eager young fellow, with a sweep of his hand and a half-amused glance toward a throng of elderly folk who were exchanging jests and anecdotes, just out of hearing.

We were sure of the jests and the anecdotes, because we knew some of the speakers, and the bursts of merry laughter were in proof of their cheery mood.

"My grandfather married when he was twenty-one," the youth went on, "and grandmother was not eighteen. Fancy any of us being so recklessly in love as to marry without more behind us than they had, to say nothing of their being only a boy and a girl."

"Yet," I ventured, "not one of you cares to be called merely a boy. You feel yourselves the equals of those you daily meet, and, if you were looking for a position, your youth would not discount you. It might be almost an advantage, for your ambition might weigh heavier in the balance with employers than the experience of middle age. What do you mean when you say that the grandparents had little back of them? They were well born and well bred, and probably had a good capital of love and hope and the assurance that they

would be congenial. Were not those sufficient as a guarantee of success?"

"Oh, that is not quite fair," the lad answered, modestly; and I saw that his friends agreed with him. "What I mean is that they had very little money and no particular prospects. They started in a little house on the edge of the town, and my grandmother cooked the dinners and did the work in general, while grandfather walked a mile each way to the shop where he was a clerk. Do you imagine for an instant that Ethel or Susie would marry me or Jack or Gilbert on our present salaries? And they are three times what grandfather's was. Would it be decent for an honest man, who has not made his mark, to court a nice girl whom he could not ask to be his wife in, it might be, ten years? We fellows can't afford to think of love or a home, as modern conditions are."

"For example," asked a youth who was at college and who would be obliged to spend some years in studying his profession, and then to wait some years more to be established in practice, "could there be anything meaner — anything more absolutely low — than for me to let a girl entangle herself with me? I am not so conceited as to suppose that I have only to choose; but were I fortu-

nate enough to win my ideal girl, what have I to offer in exchange for her heart? A long period of waiting, dragging on, while both of us would be growing older, during which she might, if free, marry some one who could put her in the position the girl I mean would be fit to fill. I could never be so selfish."

There was a brief silence, that I broke by saying, "It does cost more to live in these days than it did fifty years ago. Still, men are often mistaken about girls. They do not give girls credit for bravery and common sense. I have known girls pretty intimately, and I am sure that nine-tenths of them would make very light of sacrifice for the sake of a man whom they really loved."

"I have," said a man who had not hitherto spoken, "one thousand dollars a year. I shall probably have little more for the next five years. The girl I would like to marry has been brought up in luxury, and no doubt has never dreamed of the difficulty there may be in making both ends meet. How could I expect her to begin housekeeping on my salary?"

I saw Ethel touch Dorothy's arm, and her lips formed ever so faintly the words, "He might try." As no one else seemed able to contribute anything

helpful in the situation, I summed it up by a final sentence or two.

"Some of you," I said, "are too prudent. It is well to be cautious, but caution may be carried to an extreme. You could at least, were you genuinely in love, afford the girl you cared for the opportunity of saying yes or no. That is her privilege. She no doubt understands and her father and mother understand that you are a man at the foot of the ladder with only a small income; but if she loves you and you love her, that small income may do better for two than it has done for one. Be as valiant in the field of love as you would be were you soldiers on a field of battle. There is cowardice in standing back and clinging to bachelor freedom when you might take your places in the lists of good citizens as married men. A married man counts for much more in the community than a bachelor. Believe me, the trouble is not that you lack money, but that you lack love. A rich girl, by the way, frequently knows how to economize and to adapt herself to narrow circumstances better than her opposite who has always been poor. The income under good management will grow faster when there are two to use it than when there is but one."

As we separated there came into my mind the beautiful lines of that prince of poets, Robert Burns. "I wish," I said to myself, "that young men had a little less prudence and a little more sentiment." Was there ever a love song more beautiful than this:

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

"A girl," declared an elderly lady, who had witnessed many social triumphs in her day, "ought to have her first season or two for an untrammeled good time. Why should she settle down at once

into the sobriety of matronhood? A girl should not be expected too readily to surrender her liberty. A little flirtation on her part is excusable. After the wedding day she will belong so exclusively to her home that she cannot be blamed for playing at the game of love while she is in the adorable beauty and bloom of the débutante."

The old lady no doubt intended by flirtation to express nothing more than the innocent coquetry that is excusable in a maiden when she has just crossed the threshold of the social world. But I have seen too many catastrophes that had their origin in what appeared to be harmless flirtation to agree with her conclusion. No young girl should be too easily won. She ought to be not unlike a besieged castle, and her besiegers should be forced to employ all their tactics before her flag comes down from the battlements. It is beneath a girl's true womanly dignity purposely to lead a man on by feminine lures and caprices, merely that she may disappoint him in the end. This gives her a shameful victory. Unless a girl be singularly lacking in insight and strangely cold-hearted, she can usually save herself and her suitor from the embarrassing predicament of a proposal that must be answered in the negative. Playing at love for the

sake of diversion is playing with fire. As it is never safe to play handball with explosives, it is never wise to play the same game with human hearts. If they are brittle, they break; if of tougher fiber, they ache, and the wreckage that follows is not pleasant to see.

Somebody asks which is the more enduring, love at first sight or love that is the slower growth of preliminary friendship? The question cannot be answered judicially. I think that first impressions are often to be trusted, and that two young people meeting for the first time may then and there have kindled in their hearts love that will glow with a steady flame until their heads are white. I know, too, that good comradeship is an excellent introduction to the deeper spirituality and the closer intimacy of the love that lasts. In the annals of marriage there are records of happiness and blessedness that had their beginning in each of these opposite conditions. With all my heart, I believe in honest friendliness among young people, and I have no patience with the idea that a man and a woman must necessarily be in love because they enjoy one another's company and are occasionally seen together. Nothing is more indelicate than to limit a girl's acquaintance with agreeable men, or

theirs with congenial girls, because, forsooth, a man may not call upon a girl two or three times in succession without having reports spread to the effect that he is courting her. Where mothers and fathers are sufficiently interested in their daughters and sons to be their confidants, and where they know the friends of their young people, such comments are seldom made.

But I am pleading, not for friendship now, but for love of the simplest, noblest kind, while you have youth and health and gladness and hope. If once you are plighted, be true to your troth. Be sure of yourselves before you ask or accept the greatest gift that one human being can make to another. Having decided, let no fickleness or caprice lead you to sever the tie. An engagement is very nearly as sacred as a marriage.

PILGRIMS

There's but the meagre crust, Love,
  There's but the measured cup;
On scanty fare we breakfast,
  On scanty fare we sup.
Yet be not thou discouraged,
  Nor falter on the way,
Since Wealth is for a life, Love,
  And Want is for a day.

Our robes are hodden gray, Love.
  Ah! would that thine were white,
And shot with gleams of silver,
  And rich with golden light.
Yet care not thou for raiment,
  But climb, as pilgrims may,
Since Ease is for a life, Love,
  And Toil is for a day.

Our shelter oft is rude, Love;
  We feel the chilling dew,
And shiver in the darkness
  Which silent stars shine through.
Yet shall we reach our palace,
  And there in gladness stay,
Since Home is for a life, Love,
  And Travel for a day.

The heart may sometimes ache, Love,
  The eyes grow dim with tears;
Slow glide the hours of sorrow,
  Slow beats the pulse of fears.
Yet patience with the evil,
  For, though the good delay,
Still Joy is for a life, Love,
  And Pain is for a day.

VI

THE WEDDING MARCH

T was after dinner in a great hotel—never mind where. You may call the place Arcady, if you choose. It was hard by the sea, and the sparkling surf rolled in on the white sand close to the promenade, thronged by thousands of people the livelong day. The day was over now, but out of doors people were still strolling about in the moonlight, or taking their ease in wheeled chairs. The vast hotels were illuminated from veranda to roof, and over land and sea there hung the enchantment of fairyland.

Inside the great drawing-room of an ample inn, one of the most spacious in the seaside city, an orchestra was playing divinely. People drifted in from dinner by twos and threes, and settled themselves to listen to a concert of sweet sounds

that one might have gone far to hear. By and by the strains of the wedding march, familiar and caressing, brought smiles to many faces, while many a foot silently kept time to the delightful harmony. An elderly woman, with snow-white hair, and a face that had not grown old, for all its years, turned to a companion and said, under breath: "The wedding march—how I love it!" A stranger, sitting by, evidently a young matron, enjoying a holiday with her husband, laid a soft hand on the arm of the older woman and said, softly: "To think that you remember it so well!"

"How should one forget?" replied the other. "Does one ever forget that music, if once it was played for her, whether she was a bride yesterday or a bride of a lifetime ago?"

The band played on to the brilliant room, filled with gaily dressed people, among them a number of newly married folk, their happy estate patent enough to the most casual observer. Everybody listened and dreamed—the old reminiscent, the young full of anticipation. Past and future melted and mingled in the roseate present, and the artists played on and on, and nothing was so heavenly sweet, nothing so altogether appropriate to scene and occasion, as the wedding march. They who

saunter through Arcady do not always keep pace to that melody, but it has for them the conjurer's spell, or they would be out of place on these shores.

You, dear girl, with your invitations ready to be sent to the engraver, your wedding dress in its pristine freshness, waiting for the day and hour when you are to wear it, are the object of my thought and love to-day. You occupy the center of the stage, and the rest of us are fortunate in seeing you there. We are willing to be anything you want us to be, if only we may come to the wedding. Looking back through the long ago, I remember the first prospective bride in whom I took an interest. I was a little maid of ten; she a gentlewoman whom the candor of those days labeled an old maid. Little maid and old maid, we were chums, and I was puzzled and bewildered and a good deal distressed when a widower, with children older than I, won my cheery comrade to be his wife and to mother his children. She was very much like a plump, brown-feathered little bird, in her wedding gown of shining changeable silk, that was golden brown in some lights, with a shimmer of blue in others; and I was privileged to be one of her attendants. As bride, I admired her

very much. If I had tears to shed, they were shed when she was bride-elect. This is how it will be with you. Father and mother, and your dearest girl friend, and the little girl who looks up to you, and the little niece whose favorite aunty you are, one and all, may have their moods of whimsical regret before your wedding day. When it arrives, they will have for you only smiles and greetings, and will give you the joy of a genial bon voyage before your barque slips its moorings and sails outward on the sea of married life.

You have been very busy in these weeks that have been leading up to June — sometimes almost too busy to spend time with John — and there have been moments when he has felt himself a bit in the way. "They have dressmakers living in the house," one poor fellow wrote to his sister, at a distance, "and Emily is so busy with planning and fitting and trying things on that I think she is as well satisfied with my absence as my presence. The wedding is only three weeks off, and after that I'll have her to myself."

If you can help it, you would better not leave too much to the last week or the last moment. "How did you spend the morning of your wedding day?" I asked a bride, a year ago.

"To tell the truth," she answered, "I only finished sewing the lace on my wedding dress at twelve o'clock, and I was walking up the church aisle with David at half-past three."

Another bride, whose wedding was one of the prettiest I ever attended, decorated the house from top to bottom with flowers, white ribbons, and wreaths of myrtle, with her own small hands, festooning the old stairway and garlanding the tops of the doors and the picture frames, and thus she spent the first hours of her bridal day.

Still another did most of the work in making ready the refreshments that were to be served at her wedding.

If you can arrange it, let your wedding have some association with a garden. To my mind, the climax of perfection is reached when the bride and her people walk across green fields and lawns and down a village street to a church, where the organ is softly played, until the procession starts on its way to the altar, when it breaks into the exultation of the wedding march. The rite is soon over. We know the vows by heart, so easily spoken, so familiar by repetition. What other ceremony is so binding, so sacred, so solemn? It requires the sanction of the state. Before our God it is sacramental. As

bride and groom pass out, husband and wife, they go forth into a new world. Kinsfolk and friends hasten to congratulate them and wish them a long and happy life together. The reception is ideal when held under the open sky, with the sunbeams sifting through the trees, and the birds singing overhead, and the garden adding its tribute of bloom and fragrance. Of one thing, dear girl, be assured: Wherever you are married, whether it be at home, with your dearest dear about you, or quietly in rectory or manse, or in the great church or the little one, the ceremony will be for you the most significant and the most potential enactment that can affect your well-being and that of another for the years to come. It is your privilege, as the bride, to be married in the place that suits you best, to have a simple or an elaborate wedding, to have many guests or very few, and, in short, to ordain every incident that the hour shall hold.

A good rule to live by will be to avoid the first quarrel. Unless you are exceptional, you will not escape differences of opinion. These need not be disputes. If they amount to sufficient disagreement to ruffle your composure, still they will not disturb your peace if you both decide and both keep firmly to your decision never to let a dispute

stand over until the next day's sun. Settle everything in harmony before you sleep. I remember a comment, by a quaint old Scotchman, on the statement that a certain couple had lived together forty years and had never once had the least little misunderstanding. They boasted of this in his hearing, and the sage, smiling at them, observed: "Verra praiseworthy, but rather monotonous."

The golden mean is attained when, notwithstanding occasional differences of opinion and now and then of sentiment, a wife and husband can live in complete sympathy and perfect adjustment. Much ado about nothing might be written over most of the quarrels that invade domestic peace. Remembering the uncertainty of life, and its brevity at the best, never part in the morning or meet in the evening without an exchange of greetings. Keep for one another a gentleness, consideration, and politeness a little above that which is your armor of proof in the company of outsiders.

THE BRIDE'S BOUQUET

They have robed her in white for her bridal,
  They have fastened her filmy veil;
She is fair as a stainless lily,
  And the rose in her cheek is pale.
Once more by her bed in the corner
  She kneels for a word of prayer,
Then forth she steps from her chamber
  To the friends who are waiting there.

With a kiss from the lips of her mother,
  And the clasp of her father's hand,
She goes to meet her bridegroom,
  To pass to an unknown land;
The glad days lie behind her,
  The days so blithe and sweet,
When the hours were set to music
  And the measure of dancing feet.

The glad days lie behind her,
  The brave days lie before;
And they beckon with fond insistence
  As she turns from her father's door.
Trustful her heart, and tender,
  As she plights her faith to one
Who has gained her proud surrender,
  Whose face is as bright as the sun.

For never is joy completer
  Than his who waits to take
The bride who has yielded all things,
  Ungrudging, for his sake.

Forth to the unknown country
  Together they shall come,
To the goal before their footsteps,
  The shining goal of Home!

Of clustered orange blossoms,
  Or of roses fair as day,
Pure flowers with fragrant petals,
  We make the bride's bouquet.
No flower in all the cluster
  Is half so sweet as she,
No rose in the rosebud garden
  So dainty and pure can be.

Leaving her virginal chamber,
  She has bended her knee in prayer,
And the angels who watched her childhood
  Have tenderly brooded there.
Still shall they often guard her,
  And, though the world is wide,
The love of heaven shall follow
  And bless the path of the bride.

VII

ABOUT HUSBANDS

THE American wife owes a large debt to the American husband. He has constantly put her in the foreground, not of his life only, but of all the life going on in the community, the church, and society, ever since this country emerged from the solitudes of the forests into the activities of a great and growing nation. I suppose it would be too sweeping to say that our women constitute what may be called our leisure class, especially when women at home are so busy, and of necessity engage in so many diverse occupations. Still, if we have a leisure class, that class draws its members chiefly from the feminine contingent. The American husband, whether he be at the top of the ladder or its base, is a man of many cares and responsibilities, and, as a rule,

works hard and long, and is best repaid when he can give his wife whatever she asks. He bestows upon her, without grudging, every advantage and pleasure within his reach.

There is a good deal of variety among husbands. One could almost declare with safety that no two are precisely alike. They all start in the beginning with an outfit of love, faith, and hope. They have chosen, each for himself, the one woman in the world in whom is embodied everything beautiful, fascinating, and desirable. On the wedding day, as a picturesque figure, the groom is eclipsed by the bride, and though there could be no wedding without him, it is a little pathetic to notice how he is overshadowed by the charms of the woman at his side.

The perfect husband exists. A man may be upright, honorable, just, and virtuous, and still be a most imperfect husband. Most of us have the defects as well as the advantages of our temperaments, and it therefore not infrequently happens that a man of austere rectitude is domineering and exacting in his attitude to the little group at home. While virtue should never be inelastic, affection must deal largely in charity and be ready to make excuses for shortcomings.

The perfect husband is one who never, even by accident, hurts the feelings of his wife; one who is always ready to praise and never quick to blame what goes on in the house. He does not find fault at the table, although the coffee may be muddy, the steak burned to a crisp or almost raw, and the bread soggy and uneatable. In passing, it must be admitted that a wife who habitually sets her table with food that cannot be eaten, and that must be the forerunner of indigestion, is a trial to the patience of a saint. The homes in which food is continually ill-cooked and uneatable are in these days few. Occasionally mistakes are made, and at such times the perfect husband knows how to pass them over as if they were non-existent. I once sat at a dinner table where the roast was so tough and leathery that no one could possibly masticate it, and the lady at the head of the board looked on with a quivering lip and eyes that filled with tears as her husband carved the unfortunate joint.

"One would fancy that you were responsible for this, my dear," was the comment of this angelic man. "Nobody can be blamed if tough roast is occasionally sent home by the butcher, and I will not have you feel in the least annoyed on account

of this. It is a pity if we cannot survive an occasional accident." Here was the courtly gallantry of a true gentleman. The perfect husband never for an instant forgets *noblesse oblige.*

There is a variety of husband who is forever fidgeting about trifles. To save his life, he cannot let well enough alone. If it rains or a storm threatens, he rushes wildly here and there to see that his wife and daughters have on their overshoes or their raincoats, or that they are not wearing their best clothes, or that they have veils to shield their feathers, and he absolutely forces them to carry umbrellas if there is the faintest cloud on the horizon. If one of the children has the slightest indication of a cold, he is sure she has been exposed to grippe or whooping-cough, and fusses about remedies, wants to keep her from school, and sends for the doctor. The fidgety man makes every one around him ill at ease. If people are about to set out on a journey, he gets them off to the train a long time before it is necessary, and then he parades up and down the platform, looking at his watch every five minutes, wondering if the train will be on time, and asking every official he meets whether there is likely to be delay. The fidgety man may be an admirable citizen, but as a

husband he is an exasperating mustard-plaster. Curiously, his very tenderness becomes irritation, and his care in looking after trifles is misunderstood, and awakens amusement in spectators, who watch his various performances as if they were bits of a comedy. The fidgety husband should have a wife who is placid, gentle, and insensitive — a nice, jolly, cushiony sort of person, who does not mind pin-pricks and lets her loving spouse disport himself at his pleasure, without taking the trouble to oppose or criticize what he wishes to do. After all, his fidgeting is better than the indifference of somebody else who never takes the trouble to save his wife a step, and who leaves her to manage expressmen and railway people as best she can, without his aid.

If I am holding the mirror up to Nature, I must not omit a mention of despotic husbands. When they stood at the altar, they did not deliberately set out to tyrannize over their wives, and they would disclaim not merely the intention but the actuality of their tyranny, could they see themselves as others see them. It is only fair to say that the overbearing, aggressive, and meddlesome home tyrant has usually been spoiled by his mother in the making. As a boy at home, he was not expected to save

his mother's steps, to run her errands promptly, or to wait upon his sisters. They, on the contrary, waited upon him, and the mother cheerfully effaced herself that his slightest caprice might be indulged. The woman who marries a man whose mother has persistently spoiled him for twenty-five or thirty years has before her an uphill time of it, if she is to mold him anew into decent shape.

Fathers and mothers are the formers of future husbands and wives, and this fact is far too often ignored and forgotten in home life. The son of the house should be taught gallantry and courtesy during the years of childhood and early youth. He will not depart from them when he is master in a home of his own. The tyrannical husband is often a lover, strange and contradictory as this appears to be. There is little that he will not do for his wife, provided he does it in his own way, on his own terms, and at his own discretion. She is never to take the initiative; that is left for him. Should a difference of opinion arise, it seldom degenerates into a quarrel, for since one of two who are not agreed must make concessions, the wife makes them for the sake of peace.

"My wife and I disputed as to whether the

drawing-room should be papered in rose-color or in blue. She wanted rose-color and I wanted blue."

"How was the matter decided?"

"Oh, naturally, we compromised. We always compromise, and this time we compromised on the blue."

The tyrannical husband may be the truest of lovers, but if he always insists that the compromise shall be on the blue, his wife will shed many tears in secret. This good man seems to think that four walls and a roof are enough of a sphere to satisfy a sensible woman, and he is amazed beyond words if his wife ever desires anything outside them. Should she intimate a wish to go away for a visit of a week or a month, he raises objections without number. Instinctively, the masculine mind is quick to see the other side of any question presented, and can scarcely avoid raising objections whenever a new course is proposed. Men do not mean to be wet blankets, yet wet blankets they are in five cases out of six. When the despotic husband wraps the wet blanket of his opposition around the wishes of a docile wife, there is an end of the matter. She will yield her own position rather than have a fuss. This sort of husband is rather in evidence when guests are in the home, and is very apt either to

criticize his wife's proceedings in their presence or to prove so expansive as a host that she retires into the shadow cast by his overwhelming sunlight.

A man little dreams how much harm he may do by simply thwarting his wife's individuality and arresting her development. The woman who is so rearing her little sons that they will one day be arbitrary, ill-mannered men has much to answer for. She is in part responsible for the dislike among women cherished for one who should be very dear to them — the husband's mother.

Homilies without number have been written and preached, from time immemorial, as to the conduct of wives. The shrewish wife, the wife who scolds, nags, and sulks, has received full measure of reproof from judicious mentors. When Johnny Sands weds Betty Hague, there is sure to be no end of trouble for the ill-matched pair. Wives, we are told, no matter how much they have gone through in the routine of the day at home, must be swift to advance with a smile and a kiss when their husbands return from business.

I have not the slightest sympathy with the silly little wife who seizes the moment of a tired husband's return from his day's work to pour into his ear all the misfortunes of the day. If the children

have been naughty or the maid impertinent; if the grocer brought only half the order, or a range refused to burn, these accidents and casualties belong to the day's routine, and should not receive the compliment of an allusion until the good man has eaten his dinner and sits, in house jacket and slippers, to smoke his evening pipe. To me, a woman in a chronic state of complaint is unpardonably inconsequent and selfish. Nevertheless, if a wife is worn out, if she has a dragging pain in her back or a torturing turn of the screw in her head, there is no reason why she should smile. Why should a suffering martyr turn a radiant face on the spectators while undergoing torments? There are men—more's the pity—who are marvels of bonhomie to other men whom they meet on the train, to their employees or their fellow-workers, and who are ready with a honeyed bit of gallantry when they meet a woman friend, who keep their worries in the back of their minds and out of sight all day long, only to be metamorphosed into specters of gloom when they turn their own latch-key. There is no hearty laugh for wife and children. There is scarcely the attempt to overcome depression. Melancholy marks this type of man for her own as soon as his own door closes

behind him. Meals are taken in silence; boys slip out into the friendly darkness and scuttle down the street to find companions at the corner; girls slip away to their own room. Even the babies cry softly when a cross father and austere husband diffuses shadows instead of sunshine. A sunshiny husband lifts the tone of a house and makes the very air cheery and joyous. His children hang about him with caresses and confidence, and his wife, in her blooming matronhood, is prettier than when she was a girl.

No matter how trying business problems may be, no matter how discouraging the outlook for the future may seem, a man possesses over his wife the great advantage of daily change of scene. He shuts the door behind him and steps into a new world. He leaves this world when business is over, and comes back to the home in good order, its air of work laid aside, while everything in it is peaceful and inviting. The humblest home has about it the feeling of sanctity to the man who has been battling in the outside world. Meanwhile, the woman, doing the same things over and over, has not the inspiration that comes from change of occupation. Every home question has its myriad aspects. The man behind the counter,

the man at the ledger, the man in the stock market, cannot sit down in the middle of the morning and read a book. He cannot, in daylight, attend a club, read a paper, and engage in a discussion. The man who is a hard-working doctor, lawyer, or journalist is chained to his duty during the working day, just as the laborer in the ditch or the conductor on a car is chained to his job. We women may be busy, but we have more leisure than our men folk. It is our fault if we fail to make the most of it. Husbands and wives complement one another, and I am of the opinion that we might have a popular song with the keynote, "What is home without a husband?" A man in the house is the greatest comfort under the sun—unless, indeed, he is the very opposite.

The American wife owes a large debt to the American husband. He gives her more deference and more opportunity for living her own life than any other husband in the wide world.

THE DEAR LITTLE WIFE AT HOME

The dear little wife at home, John,
With ever so much to do,
Stitches to set and babies to pet,
And so many thoughts of you—

The beautiful household fairy,
  Filling your heart with light;
Whatever you meet today, John,
  Go cheerily home to-night.

For though you are worn and weary,
  You needn't be cross or curt;
There are words like darts to gentle
      hearts,
There are looks that wound and hurt.
With the key in the latch at home, John,
  Drop troubles out of sight;
To the dear little wife who is waiting,
  Go cheerily home to-night.

You know she will come to meet you,
  A smile on her sunny face;
And your wee little girl, as pure as a
      pearl,
  Will be there in her childish grace;
And the boy, his father's pride, John,
  With eyes so brave and bright;
From the strife and din to the peace, John,
  Go cheerily home to-night.

What though the tempter try you,
  Though the shafts of adverse fate
May bustle near, and the sky be drear,
  And the laggard fortune wait?
You are passing rich already,
  Let the haunting fears take flight;
With the fate that wins success, John,
  Go cheerily home to-night.

VIII

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS—HOME AMUSEMENTS

EVERY home-loving woman has her house of dreams. If she be imaginative, she slips into it as a refuge now and then from the actual house in which she sweeps, dusts, makes beds, and washes little hands and faces. One woman tells me that in her house of dreams she changes the sheets and pillow-cases every morning. She fancies that the sheets in which royalty sleeps are changed every day. Another, who has never in her life had as many books as she longs for, has a library in her house of dreams, fitted up with low bookshelves, with great easy chairs and a broad table, and when she closes her eyes she is aware of the peculiarly entrancing scent of leather in cushions of the chairs and the faint perfume of finely bound books.

Still another friend has beautiful table linen in her house of dreams. She adores fine napery, and her one exquisite tablecloth has been darned in many places. She ruefully notices that it will soon be past repair, and there is no money in the exchequer for the desired purchase of its like again.

The house of dreams in which most women live has little in it for themselves alone. Rather it is peopled by fond wishes and sweet possibilities concerning their dear ones. The daughter with a voice! How sure they are that the voice ought to be cultivated! How wistfully they think of what it might be, could they but send the child across the sea and have her taught as the great singers of the world have been, by those who know how to bring out all its hidden purity and sweetness!

The wife notes, from day to day, the weariness on the face of her husband; sees him overtaxed; follows him all day long, as he drives the plow, writes in the ledger, goes from house to house on his medical rounds, or pleads in court. In her house of dreams she sees him as she feels he ought to be—set free to do a larger work, recognized for what he is, and not compelled to remain till life's sunset boundary simply one of the toiling

multitude who, by stern fortitude and strict economy, keep the wolf from the door.

The childless woman, in her house of dreams, rocks a cradle and croons a lullaby. She is often, in thought, as devoted as the mother whose children cling about her and keep her busy from morning to night. These childless wives are sometimes blamed unjustly, as if they were reluctant to accept the coronation of a woman's life. Could one but peep into their house of dreams it would be manifest that they are praying for a gift which has been denied them.

The old have their fancies as well as the young, although few give them credit for anything so romantic and so foolish. The world about them seldom penetrates into the heart's core of those who wear the mask of age. If it did, it would discover, to its surprise, that the really old and blasé of this period are not the men and women whose hair is white, but, instead, are those who, somewhere between thirty-five and fifty, have found out that their dolls are stuffed with sawdust, and they don't want to play any more. They may, fortunately for themselves, pass through this period of life into another and more beautiful table-land of hope and gladness—a period less strenuous, more

tranquil, and far happier than that of early middle life.

The grandmother, in her house of dreams, listens to old songs and delights in new ones. The young people come to her and tell her their dreams, and she opens her dream door and invites them in, and they sit together and are confidential, sentimental, and utterly impractical, as only youth and age may dare to be, in the glow of the firelight.

In the house of dreams, nobody bothers much about ways and means. There is always Aladdin's lamp, always the enchanted carpet, always the assurance that, just around the corner, Fortune is waiting, with a smiling face. Of all people to be envied, are those who see visions and dream dreams. The inventors, explorers, the great statesmen, and the captains of industry and finance, the prophets, and the reformers, must have their house of dreams in which to dwell, before they do the wonderful things and start the wonderful enterprises by which this old planet moves along.

When the little daughter rushes in from school, in the whirlwind fashion peculiar to the girl in her teens, exclaiming, almost as she crosses the threshold, that the class has selected a play and that she is to take part with Bessie, Dora, Peggy,

Thomas, John, and George, all of whom are young people, continually drifting to and fro through the house, the busy mother is a little too ready to sigh. "What next!" is her subconscious thought.

The boys and girls of today overbrim with initiative. They are not satisfied with individual engagements; they must carry forward affairs which require time, money, a lot of practicing, several rehearsals, and an immense amount of visiting back and forth, and of an effervescent gaiety, a little taxing to tired mothers. On the mother devolves the responsibility of helping Maude with her costume, and on her as well falls the weariness of hearing about the play in repeated iteration, until she is fain to wish that her child would be contented to take a back seat. Maude is not of the stuff to keep in the background. She and her companions are just now on the center of the stage, and there is very little in the way of home amusement and school recreation so admirably adapted to bring out the best that is in them as the production of an amateur play.

Be patient, little mother. You will never have happier times than these. Enter as fully as you can into the sparkling gaiety of your girl and the cheerful bonhomie of your boy. Nothing

conduces more certainly and wholesomely to the healthful and natural intercourse of young folk in their teens than a diversion which combines intellectual effort, fun, good humor, and lack of self-consciousness. These are, every one, component parts of an amateur play.

Another amusement or enterprise to be commended for young people, although it, too, makes demands upon mothers and fathers, is the fair or sale which has for its object a contribution to charity. Do not throw obstacles in the way of the energetic juvenile mission band, the Christian Endeavor Society, the King's Daughters and Sons, or the high school classes, in which are started fairs and bazaars for unselfish purposes.

A ROBIN ON THE THORN

The frost is on the meadow,
  There is snow, and cold's the morn,
But from the window I have seen
  A robin on the thorn.
Not yet a leaf on any tree,
  Nor ever grass-blade green;
But this dull day of winter,
  A robin I have seen.

Perhaps his winter quarters
  In yonder thicket are;

Perhaps he tarried here and thought
The sunny South too far;
When other birds went flying there
He lingered here, I ween:
On this chill day of winter,
A robin I have seen.

So brave the little fellow,
His breast so bright and red;
He strutted past the pane, and cocked
His small, defiant head.
First robin of the season, he
Hath pioneered the scene,
As fearless as a brigadier:
Full dauntless was his mien

O, robin, swift the coming
Shall be of lovely Spring!
Ere long in forest and in wold
Will flit how many a wing!
But none of all the feathered host,
When all the trees are green,
Will be so beautiful as you,
First robin I have seen.

This wintry day, when Northers
May yet come sweeping by,
When storm and tempest brood aloft
In sullen leaden sky,
You've dared the chance of weather,
You, splendid and serene;
And I am less a craven, for
A robin I have seen.

IX

THE CHILDREN'S READING

HAT shall the children read? The question profoundly interests the thoughtful mother. In some children, the love of books is in the blood; other children care less for books than for tools and toys. The time has passed when the very little ones are early inducted into the pleasures of the printed page. Macaulay, at four, spent hours in reading; and of Robert Murray McCheyne, a brilliant and famous Scottish preacher, we are told that he knew the Greek alphabet at three. My own belief is that the child who earliest is taught to read, earliest opens an open door into beautiful gardens, enchanted forests, and aisles of splendor. The oculist advises today against a part, at least, of the kindergarten work that makes a demand upon sight beyond that made by the combinations

of the alphabet. Whether the child shall learn to read at five or at seven is a matter of comparative indifference, if, day by day, a love of letters is implanted by the mother's reading aloud and the father's story-telling to little listeners.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, who had a way of putting his finger squarely and strongly on a truism, once said to an anxious father, who consulted him as to the best book or books to be furnished to a growing boy: "While you are pondering and hesitating about which of two books your boy shall read, another boy will have read both."

Mary Johnston, whose brilliant books have been read by thousands and ten thousands of captivated people, both young and old, when a child, was permitted to browse in her father's library, and steeped herself in Colonial history. One of her friends and teachers told me that Mary, when a little girl, might at any time have been seen curled up in a great armchair, lost to everything except her book.

The child who is a born book-lover may almost dispense with other education than that drawn from good books. They are silent friends, who never fail to give their best, never disappoint hope, nor cheat expectation. In my childhood, I read freely all the books in the house. My father's

library contained little fiction, but was rich in history and theology, and I still possess, in great leather-bound volumes, Matthew Henry's "Commentary on the Old and New Testaments," many pages of which I pored over before I was twelve years old. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Cowper's "Task," Thompson's "Seasons," the works of Jacob and of John S. C. Abbott, and various other volumes which children might not be expected to care for, fostered in me the reading habit. The day when I made acquaintance with "Ivanhoe" is marked in memory with a white stone.

The mother of today has a great variety of authors to whom she may confidently turn when she wishes to supply her book-loving child with reading. Equally, when she would awaken her practical, mathematical child to the charm inherent in books, there are whole libraries concerning nature and science, from which she may choose. First, let me quote for all mothers a suggestive word lately spoken in my hearing by an enthusiastic teacher, who is training small children in the beginnings of English literature: "I give them the Bible and Shakespeare, first." What better could she give than our English Bible, preferably in the familiar version of King James, and the

stories from Shakespeare, so presented that the juvenile mind shall seize upon and appropriate that which is immortally fine? Every child should be saturated with the Bible. Our young men and young women are losing an immense amount of culture, to say nothing of the highest reverence, through the neglect of the Bible that has crept upon us like a blight. Somebody has said that between shame-facedness and broad-mindedness the present generation is kept in ignorance of the most marvelous library of books in existence — the library included between the covers of an ordinary Bible. The most attractive writers of the day are those who show, by frequent reference, as unconscious as personality, that they know the Bible by heart. Few stories and few poems of Rudyard Kipling fail to show that from this well of old English, pure thought, and rich wisdom he has drunk deeply. In a charming little diary, kept by a child and young girl who grew up in the middle of the last century, the statement is made that she read three chapters of the Bible before breakfast every morning and five every Sunday. If a child should read no other book than the Bible, the child would be started fairly on the road to literary culture.

Let the children read fairy stories to their heart's content. Just as every child should be able to answer Peter Pan's question, "Do you believe in fairies?" with a swift, emphatic affirmative, every child should be given free access to the poetry of the ages. To clip the wings of imagination in a child is to permit an almost unpardonable sin. Mr. Gradgrind, with his hard, grasping cry of "Facts! Facts!" is like a hooting owl compared with a soaring lark. Hans Andersen said, "Imagination is a leaf from the sky." If mothers could but understand that children walk in a wonder-world; that they vividly see things that they cannot explain; that they sometimes carry on dramas in play-time, in which invisible companions take part, there would be less blundering in the effort to make children truthful. Many a little child has been punished for telling a lie, when it ought not to have been told that there was a lie in the world. The old fairy tales—those that are found in every spoken language—those that formed a portion of the world's bread long ago—have the freshness of Eden upon them today. Be sure that the child reads fairy stories, and take the greatest pains to keep the child from supposing that fiction is not, on the whole, fully as true as fact. The benighted

person who cannot see that a good novel is better reading than the morning newspaper is greatly to be pitied.

There are gifted writers who write especially for children. There are historical stories in which accurate information walks hand in hand with bright and interesting narrative. In the home library, he or she is a fortunate child who makes acquaintance with standard authors. Kate Douglas Wiggin tells a pretty story of meeting Dickens on a train, when she was a little girl. She had read all the books that the great author had published on his visit to America when she was, perhaps, ten years old, and she could not resist taking a vacant seat by his side when a passenger left it at a station. Suddenly the novelist turned and spied the little figure. "God bless my soul!" he said, "where did you come from?" When she told him, the two straightway became friends. Asked which of his works the little girl liked best, she told Mr. Dickens that her favorite was "David Copperfield," and this proved to be his favorite, too.

The child who not only reads juvenile books, but reads Robert Louis Stevenson, in "Kidnapped" and "David Balfour," "Treasure Island" and

"Prince Otto"; William De Morgan's "Alice-for-Short"; Walter Scott's "Kenilworth," "Quentin Durward," and "Tales of a Grandfather"; the child who is permitted and encouraged to read a great many books that are apparently too advanced for childish comprehension, will gain a great deal of gold and be unhurt by accompanying dross.

In a group of cultivated women, the subject of the children's reading was seriously considered. One and another related experiences, until they clustered like a handful of flowers. The mothers told what their boys read and what their girls read, and how they had again and again been alarmed by finding that the children had been reading books that their judgment condemned. When every one had finished, a quiet matron, whose grandchildren were grown, summed up the matter, and her conclusions were accepted: "The pure mind of childhood assimilates the good and casts aside the evil, and good literature is therefore safe literature for children, even when it seems sensational."

An exception to this opinion is in order, so far as books are concerned that are distinctly bad books, gloating over vice and glorifying crime. There is a point in the life of boys when they crave

adventure and are in love with deeds of daring. They cannot discriminate between that which is heroic, valiant, and fine and that which is simply bold, brazen, and foolhardy. There are in our prisons and penitentiaries boys who are spending their best years in confinement because at one psychological moment—a moment when they should have been guarded—their minds were poisoned by books unfit for anything except the rubbish heap or the flames.

Whatever is furtive, whatever seeks concealment, should be sedulously guarded against in the children's reading. Prohibition is not invariably wise. The better plan is to keep in this, as in all things, the entire confidence of the growing boy and girl. If the mother suspects that a story teaches depravity, that a book or paper is unfit for home reading, her simple course should be not to label it "forbidden fruit," but to ask the pleasure of hearing the story. Let the boy read it aloud in the family circle, in the bright lamplight, with father and mother, and the other children auditors of the tale. This plan will never fail, for that which cannot be read aloud in the family not only loses its charm, but convinces the hitherto interested reader of its utter absurdity.

Tales of chivalry, nature stories, and good biography should abound in the home. Economize elsewhere, but do not too closely economize in the formation of a household library. Set aside a little money for the purchase of books. No other investment will in the end prove so remunerative.

MY LADDIE

My laddie, my laddie, with the mane of tawny gold,
The soft blue eyes, the open brow, the mouth like Cupid's bow —
My laddie, my laddie, you are scarcely six years old,
But the ages have been garnering the wonders you shall know.

For you has Science hoarded her secrets strange and rare;
For you have wise men toiled and delved, for you have brave men fought;
To make your pathway beautiful, have sea and earth and air,
Through centuries of waiting, in mystic patience wrought.

No battle of the hoary past but had its gage for you;
No rule of solemn Norn or Fate but sends its thrilling strain
To you, for whose glad coming, all forces, old and new,
Are blending in concurrent notes, are sounding Time's refrain.

My laddie, O my laddie, I am wistful as I clasp
Your little hand within my own, and think how many men,

Gone far from earth and memory, beyond our mortal grasp,
Are living and are breathing, dear child, in you again: —

The line of Flemish weavers, who were stout and tough as steel;
The brave old Holland gentlemen, called "Beggars of the Sea";
The coifed and wimpled Puritans, sweet maids and matrons leal, —
Who poured their weakness and their strength in the blood of you and me.

My laddie of the golden hair, there stand at God's right hand
His saints who went through blood and flame, the yeomen of our line;
And there are seraphs singing in the glorious better land
Whose heart-beats kept, when here on earth, the pace of yours and mine.

Kneel, little laddie, at my side, there's no defence like this,
An evening prayer in childish trust, and let him scoff who may, —
A daily prayer to God above, a gentle mother's kiss,
Will keep my little laddie safe, however long the day.

Those staunch old burghers of the past, these nearer gentlemen,
Sans peur et sans reproche, who look through your sweet eyes of blue,
Were honest men, clean-handed, and they told the truth: — what then?
'Tis all I crave, my laddie, when I pray to God with you.

X

THE OUTSIDER IN THE HOME

YEARS ago it happened to me to live almost a twelvemonth in a tiny bit of a house, standing well back from the high-road and approached by a long, tree-shaded lane. The little house had a front and a back door, with a passage between hardly large enough to be dignified by the name of hall. It was really more like an entry. On either side of this passage were two rooms. The one on the left of the front door was not available for purposes of mine, being set aside for certain official uses. The one on the right, which had a fireplace, a plain mantel, and two large windows that faced each other, was indifferently used as reception-room, library, nursery, living-room, and dining-room.

Never before or since have I had to do with a

room that so obligingly lent itself to whatever service might be demanded of it. The furniture was of the simplest — a large table, a lamp or two, one low rocker, and a dozen wooden chairs, uncushioned and of generous amplitude. On the hearth, when mornings and evenings were cool, pine-knots made a cheerful blaze. Everybody brought everything he or she chose into this room. Letters were written at the table and books read there; the children played with their toys, and guests came and went at their convenience. The guests were chiefly military, from men with a star on their shoulder to Uncle Sam's recruits; but there was no lack of charming women — now from the North or the Far West, and again, though very occasionally, from the South.

The only domestic helpers were a breezy, bright-faced Irish girl, to whom each new day was a new chance for mirth and jollity, and a dapper little Frenchman, who had drifted into my quiet haven after a varied and picturesque career in several quarters of the globe. In the nearer distance there was a great encampment of snowy tents, and in the town a little farther off were hospitals, where many soldiers, sick and wounded, received daily ministrations.

I recall, as I write today, the faces of my visitors — the burly Scotch doctor, the gay young lieutenants, the rather stiff and scholarly major, whose butterfly wife came to see him and spent a week with me, herself a little sunbeam, and her three small boys the most stirring children I ever entertained. These people have receded into the past, but as I recall them, one thing stands out in memory: We were all so happy, so fearless, and so gay that I can easily understand how it is that people live on the crust of an earthquake country or in the shadow of a volcano, and have never an instant of apprehension. Of the properties that are supposed to be necessary to proper housekeeping and the entertainment of guests, I had almost none. My family numbered five, and we had two sleeping-rooms. When people stayed over night, they had a shakedown in the living-room or a cot in a tent on the lawn.

Life, as I have said, was of the simplest, but it was full of interest and excitement, and it had the element of novelty and the possibility of a surprise. The two features redeemed it from monotony, and a cordial welcome gave every guest the freedom of the little home.

When your girl and your boy at college wrote

to you, before commencement, and asked if they might bring Mary or Frank home with them to pay a visit, or if they wished the privilege of inviting a half-dozen girls and as many lads, you may have had a little natural hesitation as to how you could accommodate so many young people. Looking across the table at dad, you may have ventured the remark that the house was hardly in trim for a party, and that you almost wished Jim and Betty were less thoughtless. "We don't want anybody but ourselves, do we?" you have questioned, while all the time your subconscious self was aware—just as aware as dad was—that you would not refuse the children anything and that in some way or other you would manage to make their friends at ease in your home.

It is a little curious, as life goes on and aspects change imperceptibly, to note the shifting of our points of view. There was a time when you and dad gazed at one another across a small round table and, finding yourselves too remote, you would set your plate at his right and sit where you could stop now and then to slip a hand into his. That was before the children came to broaden your interests, enrich your life, and bring you into closer affiliation, while it seemingly set you farther apart.

What with the younger childern at home and the older ones at college or in business, your lives are pretty full at present, and very likely most of your guests are the children's friends or else the aunts and cousins who have all seasons for their own.

There is a fine art of entertaining. It is not acquired by those who boast that in no circumstances do they make preparation for guests beyond the setting on the table of an extra cup. It is not reached either by those who make preparations so extensive for the reception of visitors that the house is disturbed from attic to cellar, the ordinary work is doubled and trebled, and the expense of living is greatly augmented.

PLAN OR DRIFT?

Some plan their days, some drift along,
  Some rule, some are content to be
The idle sport of circumstance,
  The football of calamity.

Drift not, but plan! Thy purpose shall
  Be armor in the hour of need;
And the brave thought but give thee aid
  When thou shalt try the braver deed.

XI

BACHELOR UNCLES AND SPINSTER AUNTS

NCLES and aunts have had a peculiar fascination for writers of romance, onward through fairy lore to a period near our own. Latterly they are less prominent in literature, and apparently have ceased to be useful factors in novel and drama. For this there may be reasons.

In actual life, the spinster aunt and the bachelor uncle loomed large as helpful allies in domestic economy until a comparatively recent date. Gradually and almost imperceptibly a change has taken place. We seldom hear the phrase "old maid" repeated as a stigma in our time. There are no old maids any more, although there are thousands of single women living their own independent lives and asking assistance from none of their masculine relations. Helplessness or dependence do

not belong to the business or professional woman; and, naturally, she is frequently detached and fully able to attend to her personal interests and make for herself whatever home she desires.

Bachelor uncles are not now included of necessity in the homes of their married kindred. They reside in great comfort and no little luxury in apartments where their wants are fully met by people who delight to do their service at stipulated wages. A middle-aged or elderly bachelor is socially much in demand, is an important dinner guest, and is popular with women, both old and young. The conditions of daily life have been modified by the circumstance of commerce and the multiplication of conveniences once unknown. Few of us at present feel at liberty to ask either bachelors or spinsters, though our nearest of kin, to alter their arrangements, that we may be relieved in an emergency. We understand that they are as busy as ourselves, and that we cannot call upon them on occasion with the freedom that used to be taken for granted.

A feature of the present hour is the universal turning to the trained nurse when there is illness in a home. If the children have scarlet fever, the mother does not attempt to care for them without

aid from a skilled hand. The doctor comes in, diagnoses the case, looks grave, and says, in a commonplace manner: "You must have a nurse; I'll send one." The necessity for a trained nurse would once have struck a cold chill to the parental heart. Not so in these days. We used to fancy that there must be desperate need, that we were almost in extremity, when a trained nurse crossed the threshold. She is now a familiar figure. At that time the mother would say to the father: "Hugh has come down with the fever. Elsie has been exposed to it. I shall quarantine Mabel and Jimmy, though it will be hard work. You harness up as soon as dinner is over and go for Sister Hannah. Tell her to come prepared to stay a month or six weeks. If there is any reason why Hannah can't come, drive on to Reuben's and get Jane."

Either Jane or Hannah, capable, efficient, and glad to be called upon, would return with the good man, and then, the campaign being fairly on, the aunt would help the mother in looking after the juvenile sufferers. Aunts Jane and Hannah were members of the family of a brother or sister, and there they might live from youth until age. I know a woman, nearly ninety, who has spent all the years of her life since she was twenty-two in

the home of a prosperous brother. Her sister-in-law is a great-grandmother, and the aunt is entitled to have a "great" before her name. She has never been paid for her manifold services, in coin from the mint. She has had a good home, much affection, abundant food, and comfortable raiment. Now and then, when she was young and strong, she was included in the family outings. This woman would, I think, have been happier had she, many years ago, found a foothold for herself in the outer world. She has always been treated as a privileged dependent, and the bread of dependence has been bitter; but in her youth it would have been thought eccentric and peculiar had she left the family roof and attempted to earn money away from home. She was the good angel in the house, but angels are not invariably appreciated at their worth.

On the part of the children it cannot be denied that something sweet and precious has been taken from them in the passing away from the home of resident uncles and aunts. These relatives were a step removed from father and mother, and the step brought them closer to the little ones and young people. Aunty could be a confidante to girls in their teens when mother was, perhaps, too

busy to be bothered with their earliest little love affairs. Aunty was either still a girl in her later twenties or a woman in her sunny thirties, and although mother may have been little older, she seemed older to her children. Children know very little about age, and often think that teachers and parents, in whom authority is vested, are quite antique, when they are really young. They do not reason on the point; they only feel. An aunt in the house, when there is a nursery brood—an aunt with a thimble and a readiness to take stitches and help out with plans that require secrecy—is a boon to childhood. This boon, now that aunty is a doctor, a stenographer, an artist, an editor, a woman in business, the children very much miss; while as for their mother, the loss to her is not made up by the help of those whom she pays by the day or the week. The situation is undoubtedly preferable for the spinster aunt. It is less desirable for the household that cannot longer turn to her for help in time of need. Similarly, a young, cheery uncle, descending upon the family at intervals of holiday or vacation, or coming home at night from the office, to find shelter under the wing of an older brother or sister, is a comrade and companion whom growing boys find adorable.

A grumpy, crotchety old uncle, pottering about, scolding and finding fault, is a different proposition. Women fit into home life anywhere with greater ease than men. A man seems to need his own house to give him dignity. A woman gets on very comfortably with an infinitesimal amount of this admirable quality. In simple justice, it should be added that uncles and aunts often give unselfish financial help to their nephews and nieces, especially in matters of education.

A man in the house is seldom in the way. He has his errands outside and his interests in the larger affairs of the world, while there is about him, just because he is a man, a sort of stability and funded resource that sets the home at its ease. Consider the familiar experiences of two or three women in the house on a winter's night. We will imagine that there have been hints of prowling burglars in the neighborhood, and there is a general thrill of excitement in the air. Odd noises are heard, as of footsteps stealthily passing to and fro in the upper chambers. Down in the cellar there are suspicious sounds. Rats? If Aunt Susy suggests them, her sister and niece scoff at the mere mention of the name.

"There never has been a rat in the house, from

CENTRAL RESERVE

its foundation." Some one who has no proper business there may be lurking about the premises, and women, however much they have of moral courage, are still at the mercy of their nerves if they fancy a hidden thief in the coal bin or ensconced under a bed upstairs. In comes father or Uncle Ben. The quick, resolute step of the man on the veranda, the turn of his latchkey in the door, his bluff, cheery greeting, his breezy entrance, restore confidence and drive fear to the four winds. A man is a bulwark of defence. Also he gives little trouble.

Men are simpler beings than women. One hardly knows how to explain it, but the woman's mind has its labyrinthine turnings and windings in certain directions, where the man's drives straight to the point. On the other hand, the point is balanced by the fact that there are times when a woman is wonderfully direct and flies to her goal with the swiftness and precision of an arrow shot from the bow. At the same moment her husband and brother, lacking her intuition, go blundering around as if lost in a fog.

The solitary individual who has formed no family ties sometimes reaches a place of loneliness in the years beyond the meridian. He or she may

still be in the enjoyment of excellent health and in possession of a comfortable income; but the friends of earlier days are absorbed in their homes and their children, and the intimate associates of youth are scattered to the ends of the earth. Death makes breaks in the once solid ranks. A gathering of college men or women at an annual dinner, twenty years after graduation, begins to have its shadows of sadness. People who tread divergent paths cease to have common objects of interest. About this time it may occur to the bachelor uncle, growing stout and bald, and regarded by the people who know him as fixed for life in single blessedness, that he would improve his situation should he marry. It may be his good fortune unexpectedly to meet an old sweetheart who has, like himself, remained single. He will not be so conceited as to suppose this decision of the charming woman to have anything to do with his earlier silence, but if he pays court to her he may discover that the woman, too, is longing for the sweet security of a home of her own. Home is never as fully itself as the abode of a bachelor or a spinster as when it is shared by wife and husband. The yearning for close ties is very insistent in the later season of middle life. Although the young people who

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are getting ready to marry in their twenties are disposed to doubt the fact, there are few happier marriages than those made in life's Indian Summer. Occasionally bachelor uncle and spinster aunt alike are called upon, when marriage comes to them late, to exercise the functions of stepfather and stepmother. It is noteworthy here that the stepfather is seldom other than happy in this rôle, while it bristles with difficulties for the stepmother.

In the autobiography of Mark Rutherford, there is a delightful bit of description that is a real ray of sunlight amid the pervading gloom of the book. In the parish where the unfortunate young clergyman encountered many trials there was a hospitable home, where he was always welcome, and in which was a continual atmosphere of peace. It was a household composed of two placid sisters, who had left behind them the cares and worries of existence, and whose faces were full of the loveliest tranquillity. Such homes there are in plenty in this land of ours. I can think of them in New England villages, where spinster sisters, into whose birthdays we do not inquire, are still spoken of as "the girls" by their lifelong neighbors. I know them in the Old Dominion,

where the poise and gentleness of certain beautiful old ladies are as perfect as the grace of an Italian garden, as delightful as a rose in bloom. In one instance, a gallant bachelor made his weekly call for thirty consecutive years at the home of two charming spinster sisters, dividing his attention equally between them. No one ever knew whether he was in love with either, nor could it be supposed for an instant that both were in love with him. The trio of friends kept up their three-cornered friendship without an interruption as the years, one by one, flitted by and the gold of spring turned to the gray of autumn.

Sometimes a coalition is formed, and two women or two men, who must otherwise be solitary, unite their means and make a home for themselves together. It is oftener the case that women do this than men, unless there be a bond of kinship as a basis. There is real pleasure in growing old together, if two women are congenial, enjoy the same pursuits, and share the same aversions. To make their harmony complete, there must be no jarring chords in the matter of creeds. The spectator who views such homes from a little distance observes that one or the other is the stronger, that concessions are made, very much as in marriage,

by the one who is firmer of will to the other who is weaker, or that the opposite is the case. Firmness yields to weakness in successful home life fully as often as weakness to firmness.

Have you ever noticed that everybody has an Aunt Mary and that few people are without an Uncle John? When conversation languishes, it may be started briskly by the simple question, casually asked of the next neighbor, "When did you last hear from your Aunt Mary?"

A PUZZLE

When Phyllis keeps her distance,
  And scarcely sees my bow,
I love her very wistfully,
  And live, I know not how.
I send her thoughts, a thousand;
  The day is all her own,
When Phyllis is my princess,
  I, serf beneath her throne.

When Phyllis stoops to woo me,
  And is extremely kind,
To all her charms and graces,
  I grow obtuse and blind.
When Phyllis is my vassal
  And treats me like a king,
I then care naught for Phyllis,
  And Chloe's praise I sing.

MISFIT EDUCATION OF OUR GIRLS

ALMOST a century has passed since New England led the van in a movement for the higher education of women. It would be a mistake to imagine that, previous to this date, girls were left wholly without education. In almost every period during the history of civilization there has been here and there a woman who so craved learning that she snatched its fruits from the boughs of the most carefully guarded trees. The commonly accepted ideal for woman, in other lands and our own, before the beginning of the nineteenth century, was that she should be trained in housewifery, inclusive of some acquaintance with the simpler arts of healing, and that, having acquired the alphabet, she should be contented with an elementary education in books. Certain

polite accomplishments were conceded to her as a right. As for the rigid intellectual training which to young men was a matter of course, no one dreamed of bestowing it on women.

Between 1814 and 1837, excellent schools for girls came into existence in the New England States. Ipswich Seminary, under Sarah Grant and Mary Lyon, preceded Mount Holyoke Academy, which Miss Lyon founded, having in her mind the necessity of sending out teachers for girls, well prepared for their work, to other parts of the rapidly growing country. Wheaton Seminary, at Norton, Massachusetts, was opened in 1835, and had the distinction of being one of the earliest schools for girls which received an endowment.

Naturally, as flower from bud or fruit from blossom, the women's college of today has been evolved from the girls' school of yesterday. The college has not superseded the school. At the present time, high-class private schools for young women are found in every part of our country and, equally, colleges are everywhere open, inviting girls to enter and engage in study, as their brothers do, with or without the ultimate goal of a profession in later life. Everything in reference to what was formerly called woman's sphere has

changed, widened, or indefinitely multiplied its activities in the last hundred years. Tennyson's "Princess," once in combination a dream, a jest, and a prophecy, is now a fulfilment, serving to show how sure and marvelous was the poet's insight. Still, however great may be time's modifications, nature forever indicates woman's preferred scheme of life. Married or single, she must always remain the creator and preserver of the home. A broad and liberal education in line with her individual tendencies and talents will always assist her to carry out her mission in life.

The question is pertinent: In what does a liberal education for woman consist?

Apparently, the general answer to this query, so far as an observer may judge, is that it consists in teaching our daughters two or three languages, ancient or modern, forcing on them the study of advanced mathematics, introducing them to chemistry, zoölogy, geography, history, logic, rhetoric, botany, and whatever other subject the human mind can conceive as the proper topic to crowd into a curriculum. The little girl starts in the kindergarten, where her dimpled fingers prick patterns into paper and her little hands are employed in the molding of clay. Reading, which the normal

child might as easily learn as the various lessons of the kindergarten, is postponed until she arrives at the appropriate grade in the primary school. The child, having reached this grade, is thenceforward pushed onward by a series of steps from class to class, until she becomes a freshman in the high school. Four years in the high school make her ready for another four in college, years of strain for the conscientious girl.

I have not the least objection to the excellent advantages of the high school. That which seems to me an objection — one which, I grant, it would be difficult to remedy — is that, all along, too much is attempted; and that, all along, the ordinary education ignores the individual, and aims to turn out graduates who are precisely alike — as uniform in appearance as soldiers in a well-drilled army, and as carefully unfitted for practical life as if households had never existed. The girl is too busy to mend her own clothes or take any share in the work done by her mother in kitchen or parlor. All over the land, from end to end, there is a wail of distress because we cannot obtain even passably good help in the home. The manual training administered in small doses in the public schools does not furnish a young girl with the useful practical

knowledge she gained in the good old days when she helped her mother about the house.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. There are girls in great numbers who should be permitted to develop along intellectual lines, without the slightest restriction. There are others who should be allowed growth in their own way — girls to whom should be given the privilege of choosing their own education and of growing according to their own bent. I hear mothers declare with pride that their Elizabeths and Cynthias shall go to college, while I am perfectly aware that neither mothers nor daughters have more than a faint comprehension of the real uses of a college.

One mother said to me: "I want Martha to be a graduate of one of the best colleges, because it will give her the stamp a woman ought to have in these days. All the girls of her set are going to college. Why should not she?" Why not, indeed? Except that Martha herself had no turn whatever for books, and would greatly have preferred to spend her precious time exclusively on the violin, which she did love. There are parents in this country who are denying themselves not merely luxuries, but comforts and necessities, in order so to educate their daughters that the latter may return to them

strangers in sentiment, detached from home life, and unable to find any place into which they can comfortably fit.

The girl whose natural forte it is to make a thoroughly good housekeeper, and whose coronation it would be to marry early and make for the man of her choice a happy home, simply wastes several beautiful years if her school life is prolonged until she is twenty or twenty-three, or later. By this time she longs for a post-graduate course, wants to go abroad for further study, and frequently has before her a hard experience of disillusionment, and perhaps the loss of her ideal.

One of the foremost literary men of this country said to me, concerning his daughters: "They shall be taught to read, write, and cipher. They shall be made free of good books. When they want to know about current events or the incidents of the past, they shall be shown where to find information. My habit is to refer my girls to the dictionary or the encyclopædia, and let them seek for themselves the answers to their questions. They shall go to school, or not, precisely as they please. Each of them shall develop in the special direction for which God designed her. Their education shall be for womanhood. I do not care whether, in the

accepted sense of the term, they shall or shall not become scholars."

I have lived long enough to see the outcome of this theory of education. Each daughter of this home has been peculiarly successful in the specialty which attracted her. All are married and are "making good," as the phrase is, in the realm of home. One has written a series of histories for supplementary reading in schools. Another paints portraits, and her work is in demand. Still another, a musician, as composer and artist, has taken a high rank. The foundation was laid when the girls were taught to read.

Speaking of a woman who has achieved remarkable success as a novelist, and whose work has received as much recognition in Europe as at home, the editor of a great magazine said to me: "She was singularly fortunate in never being able to attend school after she was twelve." I knew what he meant. The peculiar spontaneity, grace, and originality of her work would have been hopelessly and forever dissipated had she been subjected to the usual technique of the schoolroom. This is not to say that there are no departments in which technique is imperative. It is less a neces-

sity, however, in the education of girls than of their brothers.

And last, but above all and beyond all, there is the physical life of woman. I may only express a passing regret that so many girls break down nervously either during their school course or soon after it, and that there are few sanatoriums which do not number among their patients girls recruiting from the effects of overstudy.

They neither toil nor spin; they wear
Their loveliness without a care;

As pure as when the Master's feet
Were set amid their perfume sweet.

The summer hills rejoice to see
Their carven censers swinging free.

They wait within the gates of dawn
Till all the watching stars are gone,

Then open cups of honey-dew,
To greet the morn's returning hue.

O fair, wise virgins, clothed in white;
O lilies, fresh from looms of light,

I dearly love you for the word
That stars you, noted of the Lord.

I love you when in gold and red
The sunset colors o'er you spread;

Or when, like fairy sails of snow,
The river rocks you to and fro.

You are the Master's flowers to me;
His smile upon your grace I see.

My transient discontents I hush,
If but my garment's hem ye brush.

And everywhere your fragrance brings
This message from the King of Kings:

"We neither toil nor spin. And ye,
Who spin so long and wearily,

"Who toil amid earth's grime and dust,
Behold — a hallowed arc of trust!

"Oh, pause and hear the Father say
His angels are your guides today.

"While worlds in matchless order move,
Ye shall not slip from sovereign love;

"For He who bids the planets sweep,
Cares for the tiniest babe asleep."

XIII

THE FUTURE OF THE CHILDREN

AM afraid that we sometimes only half enjoy the children, because our minds are so intently fixed upon their future. The beautiful season of early childhood glides by with the swift pace of a river on its way to the sea — the broad sea of life. We ought to live with our children in the sunny opening days of their first unfolding; we ought to watch the sweet unclosing of the bud, petal by petal, and in this exquisite development we should take pleasure, not troubling ourselves every moment lest the flower and the fruit should fail of perfection. I hear somebody say that the metaphors are becoming confused. Never mind if they are. You know what I mean, and I want to carry you with me in a talk about one of the most important features of the home — the train-

ing of its children for maturity. How shall we set about so momentous a task, how endure its responsibility, how fulfil our part of this obligation?

Children come into the world without their own volition. When they enter it they are in a rudimentary stage, in which they may be shaped in any form and guided in almost any direction. They are born in different environments, and back of them are great differences of ancestry. One tiny infant is born to a throne; another in the same hour is the heir of poverty and pain; yet no one can forecast what the precise future of either shall be. The children of poverty have climbed to thrones, and children of royalty have been swept from theirs by bitter winds of calamity. No one can foretell the future, but this does not in the least diminish the duty you and I owe to children in our keeping, who, from the first hour of being, receive impressions from us that become indelible and must gravely concern their after days.

Great as is our responsibility for the children, we must not suffer ourselves to be crushed beneath its weight. Parents are almost always too anxious lest they shall fail in rightly training and disciplining the first child. In small families, the children are apt to be too obviously objects of intense solici-

tude. Every little thing they do and say, every step they take, every breath they draw, and all that belongs to their little daily round, usurps a place of privilege and results in wearing out the parents and exasperating the friends of the family. Large families fare better than small in this regard, for when two or three children are well started, the rest follow them in habits of good order and obedience, without occasioning nervous anxiety in father and mother. The round dozen of sons and daughters whose names stand in Puritan genealogies were brought up before child training had become a cult, and most of them were a credit to their parents and a blessing to the community.

When in a household the children are constantly brought to the front; when their questions are answered while guests and grown-up relatives are neglected; or when, still worse, general conversation is interrupted and the peace of the home disturbed, that a little delinquent may be punished then and there for an indiscretion, parents are thinking too much about the training of the child. They should stop and ask themselves whether vanity is not mixed with their desire to have the children models of speech and behavior. The time for reproof and the enforcement of authority is

ill chosen if children are admonished or disciplined in the presence of others. A mother who begins her work with the infant in her arms and the child walking on the nursery floor is seldom called upon to use harshness when the child reaches an age of larger independence.

All over this land, fathers and mothers are denying themselves, working early and late, practicing the most rigid economy, and sacrificing health and strength, that they may save money for the children's future. No thoughtful observer can ignore the fact that a period of peace and prosperity such as the one in which we are now living is very nearly as perilous to men in their prime as a period of war and adversity to soldiers on the battlefield. In the fierce competition of trade, husbands and fathers are so driven, they toil so unremittingly, and lead lives so strenuous, that they fall in the meridian of their years.

I was talking one day with a man who had devoted much attention to society as it exists with us in the twentieth century, and when I expressed a conviction that life was hard upon women, he turned to me with energy and said: "Hard upon women? Possibly; but, so far as I am able to judge, it is harder upon men. Think of the women

in every social condition who are left widowed, with families to raise. It may be true that women endure a good deal of physical strain, but the mental strain on men who must win the bread and keep up their end is in these days terrific, and thousands of them die of it before they have reached their fiftieth year."

Is there not a danger-signal in a state of affairs that makes ordinary life too hard and too pressing on any of us? Men and women, fathers and mothers, teachers and taught, do we not live under too much stress and are we not in peril of overwork? The multiplied private sanatoriums that never lack patients whose debilitated nerves cry out for rest prove that we take life too hard. Children born of jaded parents, harassed and anxious, are cheated of their birthright. Both women and men might live longer, be happier, and do their work well until the very end, could they carry their burdens with a lighter heart and indulge in more playtime on the road.

Saving for the children is in itself a right and proper thing. A provision for the future, a margin for the rainy day, a nest-egg that is a comfort to think of when sickness lays an arresting hand upon activity—these are excellent in themselves.

There is a wise way of saving and there is a foolish way. It is better for children that they should enjoy advantages in the formative period of their lives than that a mistaken frugality should deny them educational facilities when they are most receptive. The best available school is not too good for your growing boy. Your bright little girl should have books and teachers, and both girl and boy should, so far as practicable, be associated with refined companions and have about them the atmosphere that assures to them culture as well as knowledge of books. To educate several children well, to give them an all-round preparation for life, and to equip them for the opportunities that await the young men and women of a rapidly coming day, is of necessity an arduous enterprise. It must often cost money — sometimes more and sometimes less — and my point is that money is more wisely invested in the education of children than in any securities under the sun.

We need only to look about us to be convinced that a vast inherited fortune does not invariably bring contentment and success to the sons and daughters of wealth. Comparatively few of us ever expect to be the possessors of great wealth. A moderate share of the good things of this life,

the ability to pay our debts promptly, a little margin beyond the immediate hour, a home for old age—what more than this can we anticipate?

The habit of thrift is praiseworthy; but, in considering our children's future, let us put thrift in its proper setting among other virtues. The children are here today; tomorrow they will be beyond our hand, and responsible for their own future. Wise spending should be the twin virtue with wise saving, in their upbringing. Suppose we try to live very simply, to economize in the matter of display, to buy new books rather than new clothing, and to emancipate ourselves from the tyranny of fashion. Let reality be our keynote, and let us sacrifice nothing to mere show.

It would be unfair to things as they are to say that either country life or city life is in itself the ideal condition for children. A firm physical basis should be sought for, and the child brought up in the town is so surrounded by prohibitions and restrictions that this is less easily within his grasp than within that of his country cousin. Narrow streets, with thronged sidewalks overhung by sky-scraping buildings; crowded thoroughfares, where public and private conveyances pass to and fro all day long, and policemen at every corner,

forbidding wholesome play, make against the most healthful conditions for the child of the town. This assertion does not, of course, apply to the child of the broad avenue and the stately mansion. This child spends at least half the year in the country. The city schools have the finest appliances, the most thoroughly equipped teachers, and the advantage of the most approved modern systems of pedagogy, and city children are wide-awake, alert, and ambitious at an earlier age than is usual with children in the country.

Having admitted this much, let me give my vote in favor of country life for children. The lad brought up on the farm has not only free scope for running, jumping, climbing hills, fishing, and enjoying outdoor pastimes; he has, besides, tasks about the home—the farm animals to feed and care for, and numbers of things to do that develop in him real manliness while insuring his healthful growth. In every one of our great cities statistics might be taken that would show how the country boys forge ahead in the contests of business and the professions. They come from the mountains and the seashore—the sturdy lads who had their earliest preparation in district schools and by the farmer's hearth; they come from the little towns

and villages and the pleasant suburbs; and in their young manhood they take honors in college, and later on they take honors in life.

A firm physical basis, on which a sound mentality builds, is the best preparation for success when childhood is over, and, in country or city, we should aim at giving it to the children for the future.

Among the letters that came to me one morning in the mail there happened to be one from a mother whose home is in a primitive mining town. Her husband and herself are highly educated and intellectual. His business obliges him to live—his wife's devotion to him inclines her to share his life—in an uncongenial place. The neighbors are good people, but are rude and illiterate; there is no church within reach, and the school, a poor one, is nearly two miles from the house. As for books, no one in the settlement cares anything for them; and my correspondent feels extremely anxious about her children, because those with whom they play are of foreign birth and have no training in good manners. This mother confronts a problem that has been successfully confronted and successfully solved by others before her in our vast new country. If her children have, in the first ten

years, the background of a sweet and refined home, where Love reigns and frankness exists between the parents, they may receive there the elements of a thorough education. The books and magazines in this home are for them educational in the best sense. Careful training in table manners and attention to correct speech will give them an equal start with children of their own class in other places. The mother need not fear very much harm to their morals or, for that matter, to their manners, if they share their sports with the children of the poor.

A settlement worker in New York City, a woman of the widest social experience, said to me that the chief difference she saw between the children of the well-to-do and those of the very poor was that the latter were better behaved, more obedient, and more unselfish than the former. As a training for the future here in America, children of all ranks should associate together to a certain extent.

Before the children of this household are grown, these parents will have, in the nature of things, to send them away to school. They must make up their minds to parting with them for a series of years, precisely as missionaries in foreign lands

send their children to the home land for education. The separation may be a trial, but it is a trial that has many compensations. We have come to see, have we not, that in the happiest situations of home life, where we are surrounded by good schools, it is often an essential in our children's development that they shall learn self-reliance by going away from home and receiving their training in schools and universities at a distance from us. No parent need ever feel great anxiety for the future of children who are well started during the earliest years. God and mother have the children first. Nothing need be apprehended for them, if good foundations are laid while they are still under the fostering care of father and mother and their little world is bounded by the walls of a happy home.

THE LITTLE ONES HE BLESSED

I wonder if ever the children
  Who were blessed by the Master of old
Forgot He had made them His treasures,
  The dear little lambs of His fold.
I wonder if, angry and willful,
  They wandered and went far astray,
The children whose feet had been guided
  So safe and so soon in the way.

One would think that the mothers at evening,
  Soft smoothing the silk-tangled hair,
And low-leaning down to the murmur
  Of sweet, childish voices in prayer,
Oft bade the small pleaders to listen,
  If haply again they might hear
The words of the gentle Redeemer
  Borne swift to the reverent ear.

And my heart cannot cherish the fancy
  That ever those children went wrong,
And were lost from the peace and the shelter,
  Shut out from the feast and the song;
To the day of gray hairs they remembered,
  I think, how the hands that were riven
Were laid on their heads when Christ uttered
  "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

He has said it to us, little children,
  Who spell it in God's word today;
We, too, may be sorry for sinning,
  We also believe and obey;
And 'twill grieve the dear Saviour in heaven
  If one, only one, shall go wrong —
Be lost from the fold and the shelter,
  Shut out from the feast and the song.

XIV

THE BOY AND THE LATCH-KEY

HE dividing line between childhood and adolescence may be shadowy. Nevertheless, it is definite. Adolescence swiftly passes on to manhood. The boy of seventeen will, before long, be the man of twenty-one. To parents, the boy does not grow up so rapidly and so certainly as he does to his own consciousness. "You treat me as if I were a kid," the youth in the later teens will exclaim, when his mother, fluttering over him with a tenderness she does not try to conceal, and with a vague anxiety lest temptations shall become too strong for him, asks him questions that he does not wish to answer. If ever a mother needs tact, it is when the boy is in the transition period — when the tides of manhood are flowing in upon him, while still he is not equipped for the conflict,

because he is young. The revolt against youth and against being thought young often makes a boy seem blunt, brusque, and possibly boorish. It is boorish to be rude to one's mother. In his heart, the well-meaning boy knows this, and, if he be an affectionate son, he begs pardon for each transgression of the code that has been his from the cradle.

In the hours between sixteen and twenty-one, a boy should manifestly not be treated like a kid. He must be thrown upon his own responsibility. If in school or in college, it is the worst possible misfortune for him to be too generously equipped with spending money. This is as great a misfortune as the opposite of having no money at all. The youth who must work his way by hard and grinding labor may in the end arrive at his goal and may achieve distinction. The price he has to pay is frequently a large one, draining his physical powers to the dregs. Intellectually, the boy does best who is forced to undergo reasonable self-denial while his comforts are assured as to food, lodging, and clothing. Too large an allowance and too unchecked personal freedom are perilous to the lad away from home.

Whether at home, under the parental roof and

eye, or absent, she who is the ideal mother will strive by every possible means to keep inviolate her boy's confidence in her. Too tight a rein should not be drawn when a boy is slipping the tether of childhood and starting on the race of maturity. Not to be surprised at any confidence, is a sensible rule for adoption. Not with too obvious a measure of opposition to frown upon friendships that do not meet approval, is another course that commends itself to common sense. The mother who is supplied with an excellent fund of common sense is most likely to stumble and make mistakes in the days when discipline and management are over, and friendly intimacy must be the rule.

As to the latch-key, when the boy is living at home, it is not merely a convenience, saving considerable trouble; it is to its possessor a sign and symbol of the liberty enjoyed by grown-up people. When the boy has a latch-key, nobody has to sit up to let him in when he has made an evening call, when he returns from the gymnasium, when he has been abroad on any errand or engagement. He comes in, closes the door, and, if aware that every one else has retired, it devolves upon him to bar the house against intruders for the night. Quietly

as the boy may enter, he seldom passes his mother's door without hearing her call his name. "Is that you, John? Have you had a pleasant evening?" she calls to him, cheerfully, gently, delightedly, because she is so glad that her boy is safe at home and going to bed; and, if she could, she would like to tuck him up as she did when he was five or six or seven. Years do not count with mothers. The young man cannot understand it, but while the mother glories in his inches, his athletic prowess, his resonant voice, and quick step, she never loses the yearning that she had when he was her little son. Nine times out of ten, when the boy comes home, and every one else is in bed, he stops at the door to say good-night to father and mother; and this is as it should be.

The boy's room ought to be his castle. Once upon a time the odds and ends, the mismatched furniture, and the articles that no one wanted, were thought sufficiently comfortable for the boy's room. Once upon a time, too, mothers did not dream that the boy whose comrades came freely into the house; the boy who had the right of way in sitting up over his books, pottering over inventions, trying what he might do in wireless telegraphy or carpentry, or painting pictures, or in writing stories, should carry

on his plans unchallenged. The time for making laws and establishing habits is the time when the little feet run here and there, following the mother in the kitchen, the garden, and the chamber. The time for restraints and restrictions is in the first seven years of life. As the individual develops and the boy, full of ambition, of hope, and of ardor, burns to take his place in the world of men, he must have room for expansion. It is not worth while then to read the riot act whenever he makes a mistake. Nagging, scolding, fault-finding, and meddling are far too common, are too frequently the expressions of a mother-love that is neither unselfish nor wise.

To insinuate that the boy in his teens is deliberately doing wrong, may be the impelling cause that will send him on the downward road. To charge him with follies for which he has had no desire, is to suggest them to his thought. Every ill thought and every evil suggestion drives a sensitive mind in the wrong direction, weakens the will, and works injury. Expect the best of the boy in his teens. Do not treat him—in his own language—as if he were a kid. Treat him as if he were already a man. Give him something to do that involves effort and shows that he is trusted. Take him

wholly into the family confidence and give him a share in the family councils. If home means are straitened, instead of assuming more than the burdened shoulders of the toiling father can bear, let the youth know the situation and share the load. On no account force a boy into work for which he has no inclination because, in the judgment of mother and father, it promises advancement. The number of men who are failures in the pulpit, in business, and in professions is continually augmented by the vanity or optimism of parents who attribute to sons qualities the latter do not possess. The boy who would make a fine farmer, a successful blacksmith, a clever engineer, should be permitted to follow his bent. Sometimes a boy may try half a dozen lines before he discovers the one that is to be his special pursuit in life. Let him try. If he try bravely and honestly, opportunity will not be lost in the end.

There is a poem by Edmund Rowland Sill that has its suggestion for the young man at the parting of the ways, and indirectly a suggestion for their parents:

> This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
> There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
> And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged

A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung upon the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing!"—He snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Have we wandered away from the latch-key? Not so very far. One does not give the key of the house to a tramp, a stranger, or an enemy; one bestows the key upon the member of the family, the friend, the son of the house — in token always of equal rights and equal privileges, of reliance upon discretion and good faith. The boy who has the latch-key is the boy who may be trusted.

THIS IS THE TIME

Now is the time to be cheery,
  And to face the foe like a man;
When the battle is going against you,
  And the enemy presses the van.
Now is the time to march onward,
  To march with a shout and a song,
When the right is in danger of falling,
  And needs the defence of the strong.

Taking the part of the weaker,
  Doing the thing that you may,
Valiant for truth as you see it,
  And scorning to flee from the fray;
This is the time to be manly,
  When the good cause is needing a man:
Then heed not the foe with his bluster;
  Be cheery, and fight as you can.

XV

OUR TEACHERS AND OUR SCHOOLS

I SUPPOSE it to be an admitted fact that pedagogy is an ill-paid profession. The salary of the teacher in every grade, from the kindergarten to the university, is small in comparison with the work demanded and rendered in return. The teacher does not always receive a living allowance. When salaries are apparently munificent, the requirements as to the style of living to be maintained, and the continual drains upon the income, cut them down to a figure that would amaze the uninitiated. For example, from time to time, one of our liberal and open-handed millionaires bestows upon a struggling college a large conditional gift. A new dormitory, a library, a gymnasium, or a laboratory, is to be donated to the institution, and the friend of education, who is

scattering his bounties right and left, makes the gift payable within a time limit, provided that an equal sum be raised by the college. I have witnessed many an agonizing effort to raise this additional sum, and foremost among those who, for the purpose, deny themselves the comforts of life, are the professors and their wives—the men and women whose very life-blood has for years been vitalizing the college in question.

In our great public-school system, admirable as it is, there is one loose plank. School boards and municipalities seem too often oblivious to the error in their stingy policy of snipping off little bits here and there and saving expense by obliging the hard-working, conscientious teachers to toil beyond their strength and undertake more labor than ought to be laid upon their shoulders. For example, the woman principal of a high school in a flourishing town, receiving the stipend of one thousand dollars a year, is compelled to teach three hours a day and take charge of a study period of one hour a day, as well as to carry on the multiform responsibilities of her position. She thus saves the board of education in her town the salary of one teacher. In other words, she is forced to carry forward double work, at the imminent peril of breaking down in mid-

career. A man, were he occupying the same position in the same town, would be paid fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars a year, and, in all probability, would refuse to do quite so much work. This, however, is apart from the present consideration. Neither men nor women are generously paid if they select teaching as their work in life.

Apropos of conditional gifts, I find in my desk a letter in which these pathetic sentences occur: "The cruel policy of conditional donations nearly brought our president to the grave, and led to a cut of two hundred dollars a year on the already meager salaries of our professors, constraining them, besides, to make a subscription of one hundred dollars apiece from the remainder, and then wrung two thousand five hundred dollars from the poor students, who could not afford to give a cent."

Thinking of the debt we owe to faithful teachers, who deal with childhood in the period when it is most receptive and impressions are most permanent, I think that many of us must remember how much was done for us outside the schoolroom. What we were taught when we recited lessons and pored over books in the classroom was of extreme

importance; but the direct effect of talks and walks and visits with a favorite teacher, when school hours were finished, had a bearing upon our minds and hearts which outweighed tasks and recitations. I said one day to a graduate: "Tell me what good thing your college has done for you in the last four years?" He replied, without an instant's hesitation: "It has given me the privilege of being taught by Dr. S. His standards have become mine. I want to be the sort of man that he is." The reply reminded me of the late President Garfield's definition of a university: "Mark Hopkins on one end of a log, and a student at the other."

A woman who has spent many years as a successful teacher declares that she owes her greatest strength and her capacity for faith to a teacher under whose influence she came in her early teens. "I was born," she tells me, "with a tendency to skepticism. I have always had to reason out everything and be satisfied by mental processes concerning the right and wrong of whatever was presented to me. The teacher who discovered this quality in my girlhood did not meet me with criticism, and seemed in no way surprised that so young a person as I should have the attitude of an agnostic. She made me her friend. Busy as she was, she gave

me invitations to her home, and, with a tact so winning and persuasive that I hardly knew what she was doing, she led me from the darkness into the sunlight, and made the Bible a real book to me. I can never begin to set down one by one the steps of the path along which I was guided by her gentle hand."

The work done by this teacher in the past has been multiplied a hundred-fold in the fruitful life of the young girl in whom she took so personal an interest. The work the same girl has done in a career of brilliant success will similarly repeat itself in the lives of those whom she has taught. Just as the pebble tossed into the lake is said to agitate all the waters on the globe, so the influence of a faithful teacher goes on and on indefinitely.

> As when the tired waves, vainly breaking,
> Seem here no painful inch to gain,
> Far out, through creeks and inlets making,
> Comes silent, flooding in the main.

Here is a young woman at work in an overcrowded classroom in a great city. Among the small lads in front of her is a half-starved, ragged, and rather dirty child, the product of a home that does not deserve the name. The teacher takes spe-

cial pains with this forlorn little chap, investigates his home conditions, discovers them to be unutterably wretched, and quietly, as a matter of course, does what she can to uplift this waif of the street and give him an incentive towards self-help. When he leaves her class, she still keeps an eye on him and interests other teachers, never condescending or patronizing, but always acting in the spirit of the truest friendliness. This lad, shall we say, is a specimen of many. By incredible patience he rises from grade to grade, and by and by becomes a man. What he ultimately may be depends on the stuff divinely put in him at the outset. Sometimes he gets so far as to be a policeman. One such boy known to me was a faithful guardian of the peace, and rose from the ranks to a captaincy. Another may become a merchant; another, who knows, a poet; another, perhaps, a preacher of righteousness. Wherever the boy finds his place in life, we may be reasonably sure that the community owes for him its thanks to the teacher who wrought so well, thought so little about herself, and never imagined that she was a heroine, a missionary, or anybody entitled to compete for laurels. She was simply a maid of all work, performing her duties with a delicacy and characteristic

thoroughness that every one around her took for granted.

The debt civilization owes to the teacher defies computation. It behooves those who have the opportunity to make the profession more attractive to scholarly men and women, to dignify it by holding it in greater honor, and to reward it in a more liberal measure of financial remuneration.

When our children are beginning to attend school, it is convenient to send them to the nearest building in which instruction is given. A mother who was spending the year in Paris said that the largest part of her day was occupied in escorting a little son to and from school. There were several sessions, and it was not safe to send him into the crowded street alone. After awhile some one in the school suggested that mademoiselle should call for Willie and bring him home again, as it was her custom to do with a number of the small pupils. A tiny sum a month was charged for this service, and thenceforward Willie joined a little group of children who were piloted to school each morning and noon under the guardianship of mademoiselle, who was responsible for their return when school was over.

No mistake can be so irrevocable as that which

involves carelessness in selecting the first school and the first teacher. Whoever looks upon the primary teacher as a personage inferior to the specialists in other educational lines convicts herself of want of thought. The first school which the little ones go to is their starting-point, and the tone of the voice, good manners, and general loveliness of the teacher are to be considered precisely as one would consider her ability to teach the A-B-C's. No parent can be indifferent to the choice of a school, although at different ages children have different needs. Coeducation is certainly desirable for boys and girls alike, until they reach the boundary between childhood and adolescence. For the youth and maiden it is an open question, not to be settled in an arbitrary way, whether it is better for them to study and recite together, or to pursue their studies apart. When young people attend a coeducational college, the claim is made that they see each other so constantly and in circumstances so unromantic that sentiment is in abeyance, and there is little of folly and flirtation. No doubt this is frequently the case, yet my own observation has led me to a preference for the distinctive woman's college and the distinctive college for men. When serious, sober, earnest study is the

matter in hand, it seems to me as well that the sexes should be separated.

In choosing a school for your daughter or your son, whether it be near your home or at a distance, take into account the health of the situation, the hygienic character of the building, the equipment of the school in art and literature, the personality of the teachers, and the probable associations of the children. Friendships formed in school and college often endure through life. Without being in the least snobbish, a mother may wish and decide that her daughters shall mingle on equal terms with refined and well-behaved young people, and that they shall not be in peril of coarseness and deterioration from daily contact with ill-trained and unmannerly young people. This desire has its advantages, too, in the upbringing and school life of boys; and yet there is much to be said in favor of letting an American boy attend school with all sorts of other boys, giving him an opportunity for comradeship with the world in general, so that he shall not be unprepared for meeting and working with men in future days. He should be armed against temptation by principle, not shielded from it by overzeal and mistaken kindness. He must learn to fight for the right.

THE ACADEMY BELL

The rich air is sweet with the breath of September,
The sumac is staining the hedges with red;
Soft rests on the hill-slopes the light we remember,
The glory of days which so long ago fled, —
When, brown cheeked and ruddy,
Blithe-hearted and free,
The summons to study
We answered with glee.
Listen, oh! listen once more to the swell
Of the masterful, merry Academy Bell!

It sounds not in vain over mountain and valley,
That tocsin which gathers the far-scattered clans;
From playtime and leisure fleet-footed they rally,
Brave lads and bright lasses, o'erflowing with plans;
From croquet and cricket
To blackboard and map,
Is but shooting a wicket;
No fear of mishap.
Oh, hark! how it echoes through dingle and dell,
The jocund, the earnest Academy Bell!

They fly, at its call, from soft mother caresses;
The boy will not tarry, the girl cannot wait;
So the round head close-clipped and the loose-flowing tresses
Together flash out from the vine-trellised gate;
And the house that was holden
By revel supreme,
Is wrapped in the golden
Fair peace of a dream.
To sisters and mothers, how silvern the swell
Of the rest-bringing, easeful Academy Bell!

XVI

A VITAL DOMESTIC PROBLEM

LATELY I have been giving a good deal of thought to the commonplace subject of gratitude. I have not been considering this in its spiritual relation, but have been looking at it from the point of view of our ordinary intercourse with friends, neighbors, home people, and business associates. We all recognize the fact that we ought to be thankful, not one day in the year, but every day, to the great Giver of all good. We take for granted the manifold blessings of earth and air and sky, the dew and the rain, the flowers and the fruit, the sunrise and sunset, the stars in their courses, and the beauty that is spread broadcast all over the world.

Occasionally, when a great anxiety is lifted, or a wonderful bit of good fortune comes; when the

dear one who has been ill is well again, and the ship that was detained by storm sails joyously into port, we are filled with a sense of our dependence upon the great All-Father, and a real hymn of praise rises to our lips. I think our Father in heaven is as patient with us as we are with our children; that He does not expect from us more than we can give, and that He accepts the offerings of every heart just as they are, if only they are sincere.

You and I are never surprised when we hear someone say in reference to a housemaid who has left at short notice, allured by higher wages, attracted by the hope of an easier place, or, weary of monotony, wishing a change, "Well, there is nothing remarkable about it. People of her class are never grateful. After all I have done for Mary, after the kindness I have shown her, would you not have looked for attachment on her part?"

The woman who mournfully expresses this sentiment of pained regret, when her maid takes the liberty of withdrawing from her employment, is mistaken in imagining that what she did during their intercourse ought necessarily to have aroused gratitude. It might have awakened a friendly feeling, and received due appreciation. Between

employer and employed there should be honor and justice, the reciprocal exchange of duties, and the exercise of courtesy. Gratitude, if it exists, is as appropriate in Mary's mistress as in Mary, and can hardly fail to quicken appreciation.

Why do we demand of the women who rise early in the morning, prepare our breakfasts, and get the house warm and comfortable, before we appear, anything beyond the pleasant and ready performance of the work for which they are paid? To be sure, if, in addition to what they do, there happens to be an overplus of love and loyalty, the relationship becomes ideal.

When it fails of this, let us ask ourselves whether we have not been somewhat in fault. Have we taken an interest in Mary's life outside the realm of the kitchen? Has she found in our household a real home, and have we made her friends welcome when they came to visit her? She is actually, so far as the business relation is concerned, in precisely the position of a clerk, a saleswoman, a confidential secretary, or anybody else who works upon salary, and having an opportunity to secure better rates, or a more agreeable situation, avails herself of the same. My point is that we are illogical if we demand gratitude as a right to

which we are entitled from those who aid us in our housekeeping.

Nevertheless, there are families all about us who retain Marias, Marys, Katys and Betsys for a term of years, the maids no more desiring to break the tie than the mistresses wish to have an interruption in the agreeable routine of their household economy. Very small things dropped in the scale make a difference in the feeling with which the woman in domestic service regards her employer.

In a certain suburban home the maid one day took her usual Thursday afternoon out. In the course of an hour a young woman appeared with a suit-case and an umbrella, and the air of having come to pay a visit. On inquiry, it was learned that she was a niece of the Mary in question, that she lived in the country, and, with entire confidence in her aunt's ability to entertain her, had arrived to spend a week and give the latter a surprise.

Mary's employer, who was very fond of Mary and fond of young girls, set this one at her ease by explaining that she would have to wait until evening before seeing her aunt, but that in the meantime she was to be quite at home, and look about the village. A daughter of the house took

her for a walk, and showed her some of the pretty places in the neighborhood. At dinner she was not left to eat a meal in the kitchen by herself, but was given a seat at the family table.

When Mary came home, it was explained to her that this guest was to be treated by her with the same freedom she would have had in a house of her own, and during the days of her stay opportunities were made for extra outings which both should enjoy.

Leonora is an artist and a poet. She spends many hours in her studio, and when caught in a mood of inspiration sits at her desk and writes verse that sings itself into a thousand hearts. She is a woman of rare accomplishments and magnetic charm. She could not possibly paint her pictures and write her poems if she were compelled to sweep and scrub, wash and iron, do the general work of her apartment, and personally prepare the dainty luncheons to which she now and then invites her friends. That she is able successfully to carry on her work, to wear raiment that vies with the lilies of the field in immaculate purity, to rest when she is tired, and go about where she pleases, is largely due to the fact that Delia Lane lives with and takes care of her.

Delia, ten years ago, was a rosy-cheeked, untrained, light-hearted importation from the west of Ireland. She has blue eyes and black hair, a bit of a temper, and a great capacity for love. She has been with Leonora seven years, and each of them has been happy and mutually beneficial to mistress and maid. Of the three years preceding the seven, Delia seldom speaks. They were years of going from place to place, undergoing mortification, making blunders, and losing heart. It was a fortunate day when Leonora, in the intelligence office, selected Delia with no particular reference, and brought her home. Let me tell you what Leonora does.

Once a year there is an anniversary which she calls Delia's birthday. It recalls the day of Delia's installation. The two go together to a beautiful restaurant, sit together at a table replete with elegance, have a delightful meal in common, and then accompany one another to a matinée. "You surely have the courage of your convictions," said a critical friend to Leonora one evening, when the annual party of two had taken place as usual, and Leonora discerned a sneer. She did not mind. If Mildred liked the seat of the scornful, she might make herself comfortable therein, but Leonora

had found out the secret, and it was that Delia would go for her, if need were, through fire and water, and stand at her side a stanch defender and ally through the rough weather of life.

My friend, Mr. Blank, when you meet him on the street, swings along at a great pace, and yet has, in an indefinable way, the manner of a man who spent his early years on a farm, and learned something of the patience with which the tiller of the soil waits on the moods of Nature. He is an odd combination of the city's reckless haste and the country's ample leisure. He is at the head of a large mercantile house, and it may be said of him that, from the oldest clerk to the youngest messenger boy in the big establishment, everyone adores him.

Talking with him one day, a casual remark led him to speak of his home life, and, in reply to a query, he told me that three maids had summered and wintered under his roof, and assiduously served his wife and himself for a little over fifteen years. "We have given them every chance to leave us for homes of their own. My wife encourages them to have their friends and suitors, but somehow the girls prefer to stay where they are. We have always had a habit of surprising them

from time to time with a gift out of season, so that their Christmas comes oftener than once a year."

It is a good idea, that gift out of season. Who of us is not gladdened by an occasional love-token that drops into our laps as if from a fairy's hand? Who does not appreciate a gift out of season?

To condense this whole matter in the compass of a sentence or two, suppose we stop watching out for gratitude! We do not get too much of it, or give too much of it, in our common experience.

We shall never in our time arrive at an entirely satisfactory solution of the problem of domestic service. Bristling as it does with difficulties, it baffles the most thoughtful home economist who seeks its settlement. All sorts of methods are proposed and tried in turn without greatly relieving the situation. In this republican country we proudly assert that we have no caste lines, and we then go on drawing them as deeply and firmly through our household life as they are drawn in India and Japan. The differences are superficial perhaps, but they are vital, and the young woman who engages herself as cook, housemaid or waitress in a family understands fully that, although she may be a college graduate and the daughter of a

refined home, she is socially inferior to an ill-bred and illiterate employer. Yet every summer hundreds of young men and women in process of education utilize the weeks of the summer recess by engaging in one or another form of household service. The place of labor is an inn accommodating a large number of guests, and the work is that of waiting on tables, taking charge of rooms and assisting landlords who would be much embarrassed in the effort to procure efficient helpers could they not depend upon this source. I spent a summer vacation one year at the seaside and was served at the table by Princeton undergraduates, who did the work assigned them with the perfection of detail to be expected of the thoroughly-trained and cultured part of the community. They certainly lost neither caste nor dignity by their occupation, and they mingled freely with the guests of the house in the evening when their work was done. Evening dances would have sadly missed these young fellows had they not been available when the music began.

At a charming hostelry in Vermont, I have talked confidentially with young girls, daughters of the farmers in the neighborhood or students from one of the smaller New England colleges,

who added to their funds for future use by taking places as soon as the landlady found herself in need of their services. In these and similar instances it is apparently understood that the persons consenting to serve are laying their employers under a certain obligation. At all events, there is a friendly relation unflawed by the slightest hint of a social stigma. The domestic helpers are on the same footing of equality with hosts and guests which they had before they temporarily became engaged in service. Here may be a suggestion for those who insist upon having servants like automatons, and who wish to maintain a freezing distance between themselves and the people below stairs.

Is it not a little curious to ascertain that almost everywhere there is an unwritten and unformulated tabulation of the mistresses, perfectly well known to the maids? Information is passed by them from one to another on their afternoons out. "Do not go to Mrs. Blank. She can never keep a servant." "Do not attempt to live with the people at Number Eighty-Five. They will make you work till you drop." "In such another house you will not be allowed a key to come home in the evening. In another, you will find yourself

expected to beat rugs, and wash windows, and take charge of the furnace, and look after the kids when their mother is out. In another, She (for so the mistress is designated) will insist on your wearing a cap and apron." There are otherwise excellent maids who regard a cap and apron as a badge of inferiority. Employers are rated by a certain scale in the conclaves of the maids.

I wonder whether there would not be a general improvement in the comfort and permanence of this particular business relation if the mistress were to recognize the fact that the maid's point of view in the matter is as important as her own. Years ago, it often happened that a young housekeeper, beginning her married life in simplicity, selected from an orphanage a girl of twelve or fourteen, and trained her bit by bit in the theory and practice of domestic duties. Sometimes a young girl thus introduced into a family remained there the rest of her life, but far oftener she stayed until she herself married and began housekeeping on her own account. She was apt to be thorough, diligent and devoted to the interests of the people into whose home she had been brought. Her position was not anomalous, nor in any way uncertain. But, although she served, she was also the friend

of the family. The woman who takes pains to keep her maid at arm's length, whose mental attitude is antipathetic to every one who works for her, and who behaves as though flesh and blood in the kitchen were cast-iron, need never anticipate ease in the management of her household. I would have the daughter of the home learn by actual experience the time taken and the amount of toil necessary in the laundering of dainty shirt-waists and lingerie frocks. Instead of grumbling and fault-finding when the maid's afternoon out involves inconvenience, I would urge upon this daughter the question how she would feel were every other Thursday afternoon her only chance for a week-day outing.

Wages are undoubtedly generous, and could we but remove the stigma attached socially from the situation of the maid, we might hope to attract educated and intelligent young women into this department. The difficulty of adjustment in regulating the hours of work is not to be overlooked. A cook and a waitress, a nurse and a lady's maid cannot have hours regulated by the clock.

We must draw upon the foreign-born women for our domestic help. Factories, department stores, offices and counting-rooms enlist the class

that was yesterday in domestic service. In the summer-time, when city boarders swarm to the farms, the girls of the countryside are willing to assist the summer hostess, but they do so on equal terms, socially and otherwise, both as to the family they aid and the boarders themselves. In the suburbs and the cities we generally find recruits from the raw peasantry of northern or southern Europe, girls unable to speak English being the only young women willing to undertake housework. They know little about it, so that it is vastly to the credit of the American housekeeper that she secures the good results she does from such unpromising material. It is not to her credit that she so frequently succumbs to the exorbitant demands of unskilled and untrained workers, or that when once they are trained she permits them to dictate to her as to whom and when she shall entertain. A friend who was talking to me over a tea-cup had just lost a capable maid because she had dared to give a little supper for which she had prepared most of the dishes herself. "All that I asked Katrine to do was to make the biscuits," she said, plaintively, "and this offended her so that she left with little warning."

In the ideal housekeeping the mistress remains

mistress. This is not a contradiction of a former statement that maid and mistress must be friends. Where there is neither authority nor discipline, ideal home-making and housekeeping go to ruin.

QUARRELSOME FOLK

If you happen to live beneath the roof
Of a quarrelsome person who holds aloof
From all that is gentle and sweet and kind,
Why, bear with her temper, and never mind.

Under her rough and prickly mood,
If you'll only seek it, there's something good.
There's never any one mean all through:
And there's meanness sometimes in me and you.

Never hold on with crabbed folk;
Slip your neck from that fretting yoke;
Let them talk; but, when all is said,
Tell them good-by with uplifted head.

One can't quarrel all by himself;
Let the grievance lie on the topmost shelf.
Forth to the beautiful sunlight flee,
From the weird of the quarrelsome neighbor free.

Ever make peace, if but for this:
That peace is the Saviour's highest bliss,
And blessing follows the path they take
Who are making peace for the Saviour's sake.

XVII

IDEAL HOUSEKEEPING

IF YOU are a housekeeper and pride yourself on keeping your home perfect, you should ask yourself what is your ideal? Is it your own, or is it that of some one else? An immense amount of superfluous polishing and furbishing was going forward one day in a certain house. "Why all this fuss, haste, and extra work?" inquired a privileged member of the family, whose room was the only one not invaded by the needless broom and dust-pan. The reply was, "Didn't you know that Aunt Mary is expected this afternoon, and if there is so much as a speck of dust anywhere, we shall be disgraced forever?"

The housekeeper, in this instance, was arranging her house that it might conform to her Aunt Mary's ideal. Few of us are entirely independent.

We do many a thing that we would not otherwise do, because we are afraid of criticism. You remember poor Mrs. Tolliver in "The Mill on the Floss." She was a gentle soul and not disposed to be aggressive, but she had been born a Dodson, and she had the Dodson traditions at her back.

George Eliot tells us "There were particular ways of doing things in the Dodson family — particular ways of bleaching the linen, of making the cowslip wine, curing the hams, and keeping the bottled gooseberries, so that no daughter of the house could be indifferent to the privilege of having been born a Dodson, rather than a Gibson or a Watson. A female Dodson, when in 'strange houses,' always ate dry bread with her tea, and declined any sort of preserves, having no confidence in the butter, and thinking that the preserves had probably begun to ferment from want of due sugar and boiling."

Ask yourself the question, dear lady, are you keeping house after your own pattern, in your own way, or after that of another? Perhaps you haven't an ideal at all. If this is so, what about the results? This is to be a sort of heart-to-heart talk.

In the spring, for instance, everybody is blissfully busy. Our little friends, the birds, flit about in a great hurry, and their songs and love-making, and the building of their nests, are not so very different from the occupations which we find engrossing. Numbers of us, as nomadic as the birds, have changed our local habitation at the turn of the spring, have rearranged our household gods, and are setting about preparations for the summer campaign.

Concessions ought never to be made, although they constantly are made, to temperament, selfishness, and unreason. Equal rights are the order of the day in home life. The best housekeeping is that which keeps steadily in view the comfort of every one and the well-being of all. Where the theory is accepted that the home is for the children chiefly, they are usually too much in evidence.

As I write, I think of two or three friends who have confided in me and are qualified by experience to speak wonderfully well about the raising of children and the management of a home. In her home in the far West, a little woman who was brought up in Switzerland, and who has sent her elder daughters across the ocean to be trained

in the same schools that molded her character and taught her home economy, has her hands full in caring for her eight children. Where she lives it is usually impossible to secure assistance from outside, so she has accustomed her boys and girls to share the work of the house, and everything is systematized as if she were at the head of a department in Washington.

Another friend has not been embarrassed by lack of servants, her domestic force having remained with her for lengthened terms, in two or three cases extending over twenty years. So quietly moves on her large household that the casual visitor or the guest who tarries for weeks sees only results. There never appears to be anything doing, there is no creaking of the machinery. It is as if a building went up, just as did Solomon's temple of old, without the sound of a hammer. Yet the house-mistress declares that she maintains the same exact supervision, the same principles of frugality and the same avoidance of waste that were her distinguishing characteristics when she married a poor man forty years ago.

We housekeepers are tempted to sacrifice serenity on the altar of determination not to be out-

done by our neighbors. I know one dear lady who has had nervous prostration because she absolutely insisted on dusting with her own hands every picture and book in her house every week. Nobody else would do it so thoroughly as she did. The books were many and the pictures were fine, but repose fled before the housekeeper's reckless energy. She was too tired to enjoy her home or to minister to the enjoyment of her family, much too tired to peep into the inside of the volumes that she dusted conscientiously as she marshalled their ranks on the shelves. The incessant sweeping, dusting, scrubbing, scouring and polishing that go on behind some front doors have the effect of a perpetual house-cleaning every week in the year. I am not venturing to commit myself to any theory of house-cleaning. Hardwood floors and movable rugs have minimized the labor that was once an annual fetish, and in city apartments the introduction of a vacuum cleaner has made the once formidable task easier than of old. We must be thoroughly clean if we would be wholesome in our homes. We cannot tolerate malefic germs in the cellar, nor permit moths to multiply in the attic. Cobwebs trailing from the ceiling are a disgrace, and she who understands her busi-

ness as she ought overlooks her drainage carefully as to bath-room and sink, and is as assiduous about the back door as about the front.

A house can be well and carefully kept in all essentials, and still not be forever in a state of upheaval and so extremely neat that nothing can be found when it is wanted.

Ideal housekeeping implies ideal home-making. In ideal home-making we must have at the foundation justice, in the upbuilding comfort, and in the atmosphere serenity.

IF MOTHER WOULD LISTEN

If mother would listen to me, dears,
  She would freshen that faded gown;
She would sometimes take an hour's rest,
  And sometimes a trip to town.
And it shouldn't be all for the children,
  The fun, and the cheer, and the play;
With the patient droop on the tired mouth,
  And the "mother has had her day."

True, mother has had her day, dears,
  When you were her babies three,
And she stepped about the farm and the
      house,
  As busy as ever a bee.

When she rocked you all to sleep, dears,
And sent you all to school,
And wore herself out and did without,
And lived by the Golden Rule.

And so your turn has come, dears,
Her hair is growing white,
And her eyes are gaining that far-away look
That peers beyond the night.
One of these days in the morning,
Mother will not be here;
She will fade away into silence,
The mother so true and dear.

Then what will you do in the daylight,
And what in the gloaming dim?
And father, tired and lonesome then,
Pray, what will you do for him?
If you want to keep your mother,
You must make her rest today;
Must give her a share in the frolic,
And draw her into the play.

And if mother would listen to me, dears,
She'd buy her a gown of silk,
With buttons of royal velvet,
And ruffles as white as milk.
And she'd let you do the trotting,
While she sat still in the chair;
That mother should have it hard all through,
It strikes me, isn't fair.

XVIII

THE REAL THINGS

A SENTENCE overheard in a crowd sometimes impresses itself on memory, and comes back in thought with a strange insistence. Thus, in the procession, hurrying forward from a railway terminal to the ferry, a man's voice, incisive, emphatic, and loud, rang above all the others. It was a rainy day. Presently umbrellas would be unfurled, and girls who had made the mistake of wearing their good clothes on a round of shopping would be worried about their hats and wraps. There were many people in the crowd who were taking their time because they were leading little children by the hand, were crippled or recovering from illness, or possessed the comfortable habit of always moving at leisure. These, as well as others who were rushing along,

must have heard the man's triumphant declaration made to a shabbily dressed friend. "You may say what you like of hard times, but I made more money last year than ever before, and I am making a pile this year."

Evidently the speaker, who had an air of prosperity in every line of his rotund figure and in his shrewd, middle-aged face, felt complacent over his success. The lean, eager-looking man at his side was a decided contrast as to externals, and seemed to be one of those who are usually in the thick of the fight for mere getting on and grateful when holding their own. The two may have been boys together; they may have been neighbors, members of the same church and fellow-townsmen, but one had made and was making his pile, and the other, judging from appearances, was unlikely ever to make his.

Coincidences are rather striking. An hour after hearing the remark in the railway station, two friends were lunching in a restaurant. They had been schoolmates, their ways had parted, but they occasionally met as in the old days.

Said Mildred, glancing across the table and daintily eating her fruit salad, "Elizabeth, have you any idea how it would feel to be rich, how

it would seem to be able to spend as much as you pleased, to afford a luncheon like this every time you came to town, and to have season tickets for the opera and the theater; while, whenever you were fagged or tired of the scenes around you, the obvious thing to do would be to run across the ocean to Italy or Spain, or go to Palm Beach or the Gulf Coast for a winter outing? This treat which we are having is a bit extraordinary for me and for you, but there, for instance, is Mary Jane, who was the poorest girl in our class, and, a few years ago, married a man who had only a small salary and no immediate prospect of a rise. Mary Jane's husband has gone up so rapidly that he is now in a fair way to become wealthy, and they have moved into a beautiful mansion furnished in gorgeous style. Their three children have every advantage that money can buy, and Mary Jane told me with pride the other day that John had done so well last year that he thought of retiring." Upon this, she added, "The firm of which he was the junior member assured him that he could not be spared, and soon after an outside interest in which he had a share made him an offer which has doubled his income."

The friend to whom Mildred addressed herself

thought the whole matter over as she sat in her quiet room that evening. She was not of the people who are by way of envying the success of others, financial or otherwise, nor did she underrate the qualities of force, industry and insight which go to the making of the business man who accumulates money. She did question whether or not Americans are drifting into danger because they attach exaggerated importance to the acquisition of a fortune. Are the real things inseparable from owning and living in spacious houses, owning and riding in swiftly flying motor-cars, owning and wearing elegant clothing? Are we letting go of the spiritual and intellectual attributes of life in our determined struggle to amass money? Is there not still the desire for the things which money cannot buy, for the faith in God that never falters, and the love for man that links us, neighbor to neighbor, in brotherhood? Are any of us forgetting that the sharp contrasts of life mean dull heartaches somewhere?

What about the shame of child labor in factories and mills? What about the tempted men who go under, because they cheat themselves into thinking that the best within reach is money-making, while the devil whispers in their ear that

borrowing surreptitiously is not stealing, and that a golden end justifies sordid means? What about the tenements where tuberculosis lurks? What about the homes where there is no margin for a book or a magazine, or a delicacy for an invalid, because the man of the house is a mere cog in the machinery which is making his employer rich, while he works at starvation wages?

The friend, when she knelt at her evening prayer beside her bed, could not help asking God to reveal to American fathers and mothers, the men and women who are bringing up the next generation, a glimpse of reality. The real things are the things not seen. "The things which are seen are temporal," are they not, and is it not forever true that only the things not seen are eternal? Let the pendulum swing to simplicity.

Letters have come to me asking me to say, arbitrarily, what I think right and what I think wrong in the realm of amusements. This is plainly an impossibility. My opinions are not fixed, but fluctuating, as everybody's should be, on the important theme of recreation. The familiar couplet is pertinent.

> All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;
> All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.

Recreation we must have. The young and the old alike need to be freshened and invigorated by a complete change of mood after task and toil. Jane Addams tells us that one reason why boys who are early sent to work, and have no chance for healthful amusements, are in peril of becoming criminals is, because they miss the sane and wholesome influence of sport. We must be recreated day by day. Our social nature must have a chance for development.

Time was that I, who do not play cards and to whom card-playing is a mystery and would be a bore, could not endure the sight of a pack. If I happened to see one anywhere in my house, I wanted to throw it in the fire, as my Presbyterian ancestors would have done without hesitation. I have learned that there are thousands of good people to whom an evening game of cards brings innocent diversion. I wholly disapprove of any and every form of gambling, and for this reason I can but hope that the popular dissipation of bridge whist, in which stakes are won and lost, may soon be prohibited in more states than in that of Nevada. Women who are responsible for the vogue of this particular game should concern themselves in putting it down. A game of cards

with no hazards may be as purely an intellectual diversion as a game of checkers or chess, and there is no reason, except a traditional one, for forbidding it as a healthful home amusement.

Cards by daylight will always seem to me a stupid and wasteful method of spending time. A morning or afternoon group of women, in a world where there is so much that is pleasant to do, should surely devote the hours to a pursuit more worth while than whist or five hundred, or any other game in which bits of pasteboard are passed from hand to hand.

I know a young girl whose parents have extreme views about the propriety of dancing. The mother, having worked among the very poor, associates dancing with noisy halls close by saloons, where girls and men are alike lured into evil ways. She has not yet learned that in a neighborhood settlement among these people the best variety of missionary work may go hand in hand with informal social dances, where the residents are the chaperons, and hard-working fathers and mothers sit around the walls, listen to the music, and watch the young people having a merry time. *Per se* there is no more harm in dancing, which is moving rhythmically to music, than in walking,

skating, playing tennis or engaging in any similar amusement.

The objection that young men and women are brought into an indelicate and immodest familiarity in dancing the two-step and the waltz has often been urged. It does not exist in the refined and beautiful social dancing of nice young people at present. A mother who forbids her daughter or her son to acquire the art of dancing is making a mistake which she may hereafter regret. "I could not even," wrote a girl to me, "take part in my school dances, and at college, when we girls together had our little evening amusements, without the presence of a single dangerous boy, I had to sit with folded hands." Poor child! She could not so much as join in the Virginia Reel.

That which is forbidden without adequate cause, and which is therefore exalted to a prominence where it has no right to be, tends to awaken desire. There is far more danger to our girls from the possession of a morbid conscience than from enjoyment within reasonable limitations of any healthful amusement. The annual college dances where mothers are patronesses, while grave professors, clergymen, doctors, and lawyers frequently look on, reminiscent of their own past, are as

much a part of the training for an all-around future of American youth as are the hours in the recitation room.

In conversation with a graduate of one of our finest coeducational colleges, I recently reviewed the arguments for and against the mingling of young men and women in study and sport during the four critical years of preparation for life. In the years of childhood, in the high school, and the college preparatory, it is seldom other than an advantage to the girl and the boy to share the same instruction and match their wits in equal contests.

Since brothers and sisters are brought up together in the family, and the families of a community touch one another in numberless ways, forming as to public service one larger family, why should not the young people meet in simple, natural and agreeable association, without the introduction of absurd and foolish sentiment? The woman who was talking with me held firmly to the opinion that the coeducational college sent its graduates into world activity better fitted for the fray than if they had studied apart, under what she was pleased to term the old-fashioned monastic régime.

I am not about to state my views here. The subject is very much like the shield in the old-time story. Color depended on the side held up to the spectators. To drop symbolism, modern education has more than one aspect, and must be adapted to the needs of the educated, these needs being themselves many-sided. For certain dispositions and temperaments it is decidedly better that the young man or the young woman should enter a college limited to just one sex. In other cases there is a manifest advantage in the opposite arrangement.

On one point my conviction is positive. The boy is no more dangerous to the girl, in the first bright years of youth, than the girl to the boy, and it is only in exceptional circumstances that the word dangerous applies to the association of either. There is a period in which girls find out for the first time that there are boys in the world. There is a period, too, in which boys cease to be indifferent to girls. Mothers know the symptoms of the coming change. The lad who has protested that his hands are clean, no longer has to be reminded that they are grubby. His ties and collars are as much a matter of thought when he turns the corner between childhood and youth

as the girl's pretty frocks and hair-ribbons, at the same time, become to her. If, in the pleasant, natural freedom of home life, boys and girls may meet and mingle, everything is as it should be. Whatever is furtive is to be avoided. Groups of young people with interests in common may picnic, play ball, tramp the roads in summer and have little dances in the winter, may read and discuss books, and compete in friendly rivalry in their studies or diversions, without the remotest notion of love.

IN COMMON DAYS

In days supreme, of fond delight,
  When happy thoughts within us dwell,
Like vestals robed in stainless white, —
  Who time their footsteps by the swell
Of sweet-voiced bells upon the air —
Then have we least the need for prayer.

In days obscured by veiling folds
  Of grief, or clouded o'er with dread,
While dumb suspense relentless holds
  Its sword above the shrinking head, —
Then, even in the soul's despair,
Is not the deepest need of prayer.

Since to the dark Gethsemane
  The pitying angels, soon or late,
Must come with tenderest ministry,
  And each blithe day is but the gate
To some rich temple, rising fair,
Which builds to heaven a golden stair —

God keep us through the common days,
  The level stretches, white with dust,
When thought is tired, and hands upraise
  Their burdens feebly, since they must.
In days of slowly fretting care,
Then most we need the strength of prayer.

XIX

MARRIAGE: ITS SUCCESS OR FAILURE

MANY years ago I met a young couple on their wedding journey. They were very charming and very much in love. The bride was talking to me very confidentially on her favorite subject, the perfections of her husband, and looking full in my face with beautiful, wistful eyes, she said, "All that I am afraid of is that I won't be able to make Tom happy. For one thing, his will shall be my law."

I presume this dear young bride ascertained in time, with many another, that the best way to make Tom happy was not to make him exacting, selfish, and imperious. In the first glamour of the honeymoon, young folk are ready to prostrate themselves in the deepest humility before their idol. "His will is my law" expresses the measure of the bride's worshipful devotion. "Her

least wish is my delight" is the reply of the husband's homage. This does very well in sentiment.

The first sweet days of the union glide away, with the world outside the charmed circle of perfect bliss. It seems practical and natural that, while two hearts beat as one, two wills should never clash. As time passes on, and the routine of life is taken up, the young wife finds herself in a new world, with new duties, and, very possibly, new developments to be met and accepted. She discovers that Harold has moods and tenses of which she has no foreboding. Although he is fond and proud of her, fonder and prouder than before marriage, he cannot spend his entire life in paying compliments and making presents, and he shows a keen interest in trade, in politics, and in the affairs of the neighborhood. In short, he is a good citizen, an active churchman, and a clever business man; all these as well as an adoring husband.

If the wife acts upon her original theory of continually yielding her will to his, the result will be disappointing. Surely the young wife can do better for her husband than to spoil him by crushing out her own individuality. I have known a bride to decline to eat a dish that did not suit

her husband's taste, notwithstanding the fact that it pleased her palate. Nothing is gained by such stupidity, in large or small affairs.

The husband who sets out on the march of life with his beautiful comrade at his side, should remember that he is to keep step with her, to treat her fairly and justly, and not merely as if she were a plaything or a princess. She is neither. Wife and husband are equals, and from the moment they walk down the aisle together, after the solemn words that unite them have been said, they are to share life's loaf and cup, to be as happy as they can, and as noble as they can, in their ideal relation.

Imagine for an instant that, after marriage, Harold, coming home in the evening, is surprised to find that Edith occasionally likes the company of some one else, that she enjoys having a few friends in to supper now and then, and desires to make her pretty home a place where she can dispense simple hospitality. Harold, who has been seeing people all day and has had in this way considerable variety, may say to himself, "I want Edith to entertain me. I do not care to have Mr. and Mrs. N., Cousin S., or that hobbledehoy, Algy B., coming in to bore me. Edith used to

be satisfied with me in our courting days. Why am I not sufficient to her comfort now?"

Thus arguing, Harold may permit himself to treat guests in a fashion morose and surly, showing very plainly that they are unwelcome. When they have taken leave, he may tell his wife, the gentle amenities of courting being over, that hereafter she may kindly refrain from asking people to waste his time and hers by visits that are not wanted. This has been the experience of more than one young wife who, three or four or five years ago, started out with the idea that everything must yield to the wish of the husband. It is not well for the man of this type that his wish should not be opposed. A woman who is tactful, gentle, and possessed of firmness, can usually persuade her husband that, in desiring to be inhospitable, he is wrong. A home is twice a home if friends are admitted within its doors.

I once knew a young wife of quite another pattern. She was possessed of the notion that husbands were always tyrannical because her father had been a domestic despot. Therefore, from the wedding day, she began to be contradictory and perverse, and little by little she managed to disillusionize a husband who longed to make her life a beatitude, and

thought her an angel. She was a martinet in the matter of system. If any one picked up a book and, in laying it down again, failed to put it in the exact spot on the table from which it had been taken, she would fidget and fuss and look annoyed, and finally rise and straighten the book. If John left his hat or newspaper anywhere except in the predestined place, this woman, whom he had supposed to be angelic, was very much out of temper. Without being aware of it, she had in her disposition a spice of the tyranny from which she had recoiled when it was exercised by her father, and she succeeded by petty nagging in making her husband dissatisfied with his home. I heard him say one day: "My mother and sisters used to think me pretty decent, but my wife cannot endure the least thing that I do. At times my very presence is obnoxious." Perhaps the complaint was weak, but the troubles of this couple ended in a divorce court, on the ground of incompatibility, and the whole difficulty, in its beginning, might have been labeled "Much Ado About Nothing."

If every pair for whom wedding bells ring would take to heart that their private affairs are their own, not to be told outsiders and not paraded to the world, they would insure and safeguard their

self-respect and the permanence of their home. The temptation may arise, when first there is a little friction, to seek sympathy from mother, sister, or intimate friend. That temptation should be trampled underfoot. Confidential friends are not invariably to be trusted. With or without the best intentions, the third party, intruding into the affairs of a married couple, is in peril of making mischief. Make it a rule to confide wholly, without secrets or reverses, in one another from the hour that you become husband and wife, and you will have little to fear, though the four winds should blow around your house. It will stand against any tempest and prove itself strong and hallowed, your sanctuary and your castle, if you confide in and defend your sacramental union. Never let a quarrel last overnight. Present a brave front to the world. There is common sense in the homely advice to put the best foot forward. Don't begin by thinking you must have everything on the same plane with your neighbors. Live within your means, although your living be of the simplest. Try to save a little each week or month toward coming days when expenses may be larger. Much comfort is theirs who are aware that they have laid aside a provision against accident, illness, or an unlooked-for occasion.

Home-making is the province of two. Here are a few homely suggestions for husbands and wives:

Don't, my friend, play fast and loose with happiness by ceasing to pay the little attentions to the wife which came from you so constantly in the days when you were courting her. Don't take her love so much for granted that you display yours chiefly in the privacy of the domicile, criticizing her brusquely in the presence of acquaintances, forgetting to lift your hat when you meet her on the street, stalking in front of her instead of allowing her to precede you, and permitting her to carry her own bundles. I have seen a man who would cheerfully have died for his wife, were that necessary, transgress, day by day, every rule of courtesy. His customary demeanor to her was so impolite that her pride was hurt, and in her secret soul she wondered what had become of her lover. The woman does not exist who enjoys being treated with the slightest discourtesy by her husband, in the presence of outside people. This rule has no exceptions, and whether the outsiders be kindred, neighbors, or chance acquaintances, is of no importance.

Don't find fault with the meals. If you happen to sit down to the table in a mood of unrest, due to

the worries of business and professional life, bring to bear upon the situation precisely the self-control that would carry you triumphantly through a dinner at which you were a guest, away from home. When a beautifully prepared meal is on the table, pay your wife a compliment. If the meat is underdone or overdone; if the cook has ruined the duck in the oven, or the market man has sent home a tough joint, don't hold your wife wholly responsible. She is undoubtedly as much annoyed about it as you can possibly be.

Another don't, worth a passing mention: Don't, in any sense of the word, be negligent of your wife, while you show yourself considerate of some one else—a guest beneath the roof, a pretty girl visitor, or a relative of your own who is perhaps disposed to take advantage of earlier claims and monopolize your company, while your wife darns stockings. Every one of these items may be set down to heedlessness, and does not interfere with the fact that you are in the main a good husband, a generous provider, and a man whose integrity and honor are not to be impeached. "It is the little rift within the lute that by and by will make the music mute," and far too many men never ascertain, until it is too late, that the happiness of

women depends far more upon little trifles, that seem as nothing in the day's work, than upon the devotedness shown upon great occasions.

Do not be impatient when your wife is laid aside by transient illness. If possible, be more sunshiny then, more tender, more thoughtful, than at any other time. Each of these Do Nots has its corresponding Do, which any one may think of for himself.

Here are some hints for wives: Mr. G. K. Chesterton, in a suggestive book, recently published, remarks very forcibly that the happiness of married life seldom sets in at high tide until after the honeymoon. I am not quoting his words, but that is their spirit. The pomp and pageantry of the wedding are over. May I fancy myself talking confidentially with the bride? You have laid aside your wedding gown, to be next worn when you are a matron of honor at the wedding of your sister. You settle yourself to enjoy a season of calm weather, which ought to be full of sweetness and delight. The excitement of preparation for marriage lies behind you. Yours is now the dignity of wifehood.

Do not altogether forget or abandon the beautiful reserve which was yours as a maiden. Don't

permit yourself to seem common earthenware, where hitherto you have been fine porcelain. Don't omit the courteous reception and the gracious welcome which you accorded your lover, when the lover becomes your husband. Don't suffer yourself to look like a frump or a dowdy. Do take pains with your hair and your toilet, the daintiness of your chiffons, and the neatness of your shoes, and do this as conscientiously as though it were a religious duty.

Do not be so meek and spiritless that you suffer in silence, while you spoil your husband by letting him drift into the rôle of a domestic despot. Mrs. Henry de la Pasture, in her novel, "The Tyrant," shows the eclipse of gaiety and the crucifixion of family love which follow in the wake when a husband is overbearing and a wife overgentle. Such attitude may help spoil his character.

Whatever you do, don't nag or sulk. A wife who goes about with the air of a martyr winter-kills her happiness. Don't be inconsolable when your husband tarries late at the office and keeps the dinner waiting. Don't object to his bringing home guests, unannounced. If they arrive with him unexpectedly, don't apologize for the house, or the meal, or the children, or anything else. Put on

extra plates and cups and let them share "pot luck."

Don't have bills, if you can help yourself. Pay as you go, and do persuade your husband to give you a definite housekeeping allowance, from the beginning of your housekeeping. Don't be afraid of the maid. Thousands of us are in awe of this personage, and she has unfortunately discovered it and behaves accordingly.

Don't reprove John when he brings you a box of bonbons or a flower. Receive gifts, on the contrary, with an expression of gratification. Many wives check their husbands when they bring home little gifts which have cost money, and this on the ground of economy. It is seldom other than a mistake. Economize in another direction, if John is too lavish in his presents to you.

Don't be so absorbed in the children that their father gets little of your company and only a fragment of your attention. The babies may need you, but John needs you quite as much. Don't be vexed if you have to prompt the good man's memory as to birthdays and anniversaries. Don't freeze him by depression, and if you wish him to love your father and mother and make them welcome in the home, see to it, dear lady, that you have at all

times a ready welcome for his people when they visit you.

The home is more than a shelter, more than a museum, more than a place for eating and sleeping, and more than a furniture warehouse. It is the repository of joys and sorrows, the asylum from the whole world outside, for the family who dwells within its gates. Two persons have chosen each other as life comrades, and between them they have made a home. I repeat to both: If you would have happiness in this closest and most sacred relation—a relation which ought to be permanent and sacramental—avoid the first quarrel. If there is never a first, there will never be a second. Life is too uncertain, too full of risks, and there are too many possible heartaches for the most fortunate, to make it safe for wife and husband ever to part in anger. Though the parting be but for a day, let it be in peace and love. On the whole, those whose means are moderate, who must work together, plan together, and save together, are to be congratulated.

Great wealth is the lot, after all, of the minority. In this country, at least, it is beset by temptations which do not confront those whose earning and spending are matters of serious thought. Entire

confidence as to home finance, and equal privileges in the management of the common income, will go far toward the prevention of unseemly disputes. Do not wreck your happiness on the reef of money.

One day I received a letter from a correspondent in the West. The letter had been several days en route. It contained three photographs. One was the writer herself, seated on her horse, with the prairie grass waving around her. Another was explained, by a line on the back, as "My father and his boys," and a goodly sight it was to see the stalwart parent and his sons. The third picture was that of "My mother and her girls"; and I looked on the graceful figures of a half-dozen lovely girls in white, standing with their equally lovely mother. "You like large families," wrote my friend. She was right; but I like small families, too. Whether the family be large or small, if it is bound together by love that cannot break, that can stand every shock and weather every storm, it is a sight for which to thank God, even as it gives Him joy.

Home love should be more than a sentiment. It should be a principle. Our homes should be united, as were the homes of our forefathers on this continent, in reverence to God and trust in

Him. Homes in which there is no thought of God are built on shifting sand.

As life goes on, there come to us joys and sorrows. The joys outnumber the sorrows. In token of this, we may remind ourselves of the deeper impression made by the latter, and in the furrows they plow in the soil of the mind. The child whose vacant chair sends you on a pilgrimage to a flower-strewn grave is never forgotten. The other children change from babyhood imperceptibly, until one day youth and maiden replace the toddlers who played upon the floor. The little one who early went away is always a child. Sorrow brings dear hearts into more intimate companionship. A wife and husband who have fared onward from youth to age together have many associations, so much to remember, so much intangible wealth that gold could not buy, that their love is greater than when they pledged it at the altar. "John and I have been married fifty-three years," said a lovely old gentlewoman. Then, as a smile flashed over her still beautiful face, she said, quaintly: "I believe I think more of John today than when I was a bride. I was seventeen then and he was twenty." Married life begins later with us than it formerly did, more's the pity.

Waiting until they have money enough to live as the complex demands of the period exact, our young people lose the freshness of the early day, and the satisfaction of conquering obstacles in the day of small things.

Unless there are good reasons to the contrary, it is wise for home-loving folk to strike root somewhere, to stay in one place, letting the children grow up without nomadic habits. The first settlers necessarily set us the example of traveling from one location to another, and what the pioneers did, we all do. There are moments when we feel that life is not worth living, unless it is to be brightened by transplantation — East, West, or South, we care not where. Who has not felt the wish to rove? Notwithstanding this instinct in the blood, homes are most secure and families thrive best when year after year the abiding-place sea, this is understood; and yet from the old homes of England and Germany the children scatter to the ends of the earth.

In the course of a lifetime, the two who began the home together, and to whom children have come, bringing untold gladness and the best stimulus to exertion, are left in the home by themselves, as they were at first. If the children come back

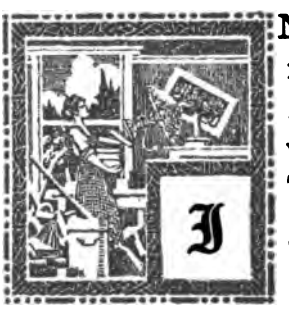
to visit them, and the grandchildren play around the hearth, the cup of joy brims to the overflow.

Far up on sternest Alpine crests,
  Where winds of tempest blow,
They say that, all unfearing, rests
  A flower upon the snow,—
A tiny flower, pale and sweet,
  That blooms o'er breath of ice;
And glad are they, on any day,
  Who find the Edelweiss.

Ah! far on heights of sorrows cold,
  Where tears are dropping slow,
Some hearts have found, and, finding, told
  How fair a flower may grow.
With petals pale, but perfume rare,
  It garlands days of ice;
And blessed are they who, weeping, pray,
  And find Faith's Edelweiss.

XX

THE DANGER OF BEING TOO BUSY



IN the moment when we were first conscious of moral training, we remember that we were warned against idleness. The word seldom belongs in good company. It stands for that which is frivolous and trivial. Indolence and idleness are synonymous terms in the minds of parents and teachers. The child who is sitting without books or toys or work in her hands is advised to occupy herself with something, or is sent on an errand. Dreams are at a discount in the ordinary home. Yet there are people who had to work too hard and too long in their youth, and who are forced at this very hour to labor beyond their strength. Occasionally it is well to be idle. If it is true that leisure is a lost estate and serenity a mere memory in many households, and if we really

are all obsessed with the notion that every waking hour is to be filled with some actual and tangible employment, the reason for this unfortunate state of things may be discovered far back in the traditions of the pioneers on this continent.

I was talking one day with a friend whose childhood and youth had been strenuous to a degree. She broke down with nervous exhaustion and was sent by her physician to Wales for a ccmplete rest. Coming back in renewed health and strength, she told me that the deepest impression made upon her by the home life across the ocean was that it was at once tranquil and stimulating. The atmosphere was thoroughly peaceful. The women had time to live and breathe without hurry or worry. "Indeed," she said, very simply, "they had time to sit down in the middle of the morning, in the house where I was a guest, for the sole purpose of reading their Bibles and other books and talking over what they read." This had impressed her profoundly. She said that what rested her beyond everything else was the sweet atmosphere of tranquillity, itself a refreshment and a tonic, which one felt to be the normal condition of the household. There was no special talk about the work to be done, or by whom it should be done. The

coming and going of the maids was unchronicled, nor were they brought to the foreground as subjects of conversation. Meals appeared at intervals; hospitality was not a burden; ways and means were not discussed with anxiety; while as for dress, she did not so much as hear it mentioned in the home of her friends.

Asked if in this quiet Arcadian life she suspected stagnation, my friend emphatically answered in the negative. On the contrary, it was responsive to the real and worth-while questions of the day. Neither women nor men were too weary to be interested in current events, too self-centered to send forth lines of thoughtful communication to the ends of the earth. The conclusions of this woman were that her Welsh friends held in their hands the secret of peace. They discriminated between the idleness that is a preparation for labor and the idleness that is a sinful waste of time. They had a right appreciation of values; they were busy in the right time and place, but they were never too busy.

What she said about life in the ordinary home of simple comfort in Wales might be said with truth of such homes in England, Scotland, and Ireland. It cannot be said about the corresponding homes

and the women who dwell within them in this great, breezy country of ours, although it certainly might have been said about many of them, both in New England and in the South, in the days preceding the Civil War.

The little phrase, "in the middle of the morning," is suggestive. I can recall, without difficulty, women whose custom it was to spend an hour or more in their own rooms between half past ten and twelve, reading, writing letters, perhaps praying, while their husbands were at business, their children at school, the routine of the house being so well ordered or so elastic that no urgent work interfered with this regular period of withdrawal from the world and communion with books, or friends, or heaven. How sweet were the faces of these elect ladies! How slowly they grew old! How reposed their manner, and how ready they were to take up the tasks that belonged to them! How able, too, to meet the demands always made on homekeeping women! And when we look the situation fairly in the face as it confronts us today, we must admit that the danger of being too busy can scarcely be exaggerated.

Undoubtedly, the increasing difficulty of securing domestic help accounts for one phase of the

trouble. Thousands of young women, formerly available as housemaids, waitresses, and cooks, are now engaged in various departments of business. They prefer factories and shops because of the more regular hours, the larger independence, and the apparently larger rate of payment, as compared with the wages paid to workers in the home. We draw on the peasantry of northern and southern Europe for our servants, and the house-mistress not only has to cope with the problem of unskilled labor, but with the difficulty of teaching a person who does not understand English, and is hampered by her ignorance of tools, method, and language. As she has left her native heath and come to this land of strangers in order to earn money and improve her condition, this person usually strikes for higher wages as soon as she is taught, and if the increase cannot be afforded, she finds another position, and the work has to be begun over with a second candidate.

If it is a comfort to the Christian woman to regard this as home missionary effort of a noble and unselfish variety, let her take it as a panacea to her breast that there are ways of doing this home missionary work equally feasible and equally likely to relieve the situation. But our housekeepers and

homemakers shrink from availing themselves of them as they might. The charity organizations could tell them of mothers, widowed or deserted, who would be glad to undertake housework in homes, either in city or country, if they might bring with them a child or two. These women would be contented with small wages, and would often do the work far better than it is done by younger women, while the little children would scarcely interfere at all with the comfortable management of the household.

An arrangement much in vogue with our grandmothers was one which has dropped out of sight nowadays. This was the selection by a bride of a young girl from an orphanage or home for the friendless. When the new home was established, the young wife began the training of her youthful assistant. The latter was taught whatever the bride herself had learned from her mother. The two made their mistakes, worked over their problems, and found their solutions together, the result being a domestic helper who became a tried and trustworthy friend, loyal to the core, efficient, and devoted to the family as, one by one, the children came. By the time this girl married, she had helped to train some one who could take her place.

There was far less danger of being too busy in our homes when this question of domestic help was thus simplified.

Step with me into any house on any village street in the Middle West, in the West that lies nearer the coast, in New England, New York, Tennessee, or, in fact, anywhere between our two great oceans. Never mind what day of the week it may be. Neither Monday, Wednesday, nor Saturday has a monopoly of work which must be done. Washing, ironing, sweeping, scouring, baking, sewing, mending, entertaining friends, sending children to school, supervising piano practice, overlooking home work, going to missionary meetings, writing papers for the club, attending town improvement societies, taking care of the sick, corresponding with absent kindred, possibly entering on wage-earning at home, or keeping house and simultaneously editing a newspaper, or serving in an office —all this and more belongs to the lives of American women. I can count on the fingers of one hand women who are carrying forward a majority of these occupations as if their doing so were a thing to be taken for granted.

The man does not live who can compete successfully with the energy of his wife, sister, or

CENTRAL RESERVE

mother, when she sees a thing to be done and is determined to do it. The fact that she can seldom do the one thing without at the same time doing several others, and the twin fact that she seldom masters the art of sidetracking for a time the thing that is too greatly tiring her, are beyond his power to modify. It may be winter, and the house may be cold until the man comes and attacks the furnace with a capable hand. It may be summer, and he alone can manage the stubborn screen that does not fit. These trifles do not prevent his wife in the meantime from fretting herself over what she might better endure in patience for an hour or two. The great and appalling numbers of women who are going to pieces physically and sometimes mentally would be at once reduced, could women take life more philosophically.

Are there remedies within reach, other than those obviously spiritual? It is safe to say "yes" to this question. Thrice happy is she who can launch herself on the stream of a good novel and forget, while she is reading it, that she ought to be sewing on buttons, stitching on the machine, or baking fresh cake for supper. Thrice to be pitied is she who has no taste for the writers of romance, who cannot be allured by the spell of Robert

Louis Stevenson, Arnold Bennett, Jeffery Farnol, or William de Morgan. I knew and honored the wife of a minister, who did her full share of parish work and brought up six children — creditably, too — although at times she forgot the bread in the oven while she was reading "Little Dorrit" or "The Newcomes." The woman who has a fad — gardening, for instance, hand embroidery, metal working, or playing the piano — and who does not suffer her skill to diminish, who rather augments it by consecutive daily practice, will not be in danger from excessive exertion along a dozen lines at once. The woman who is contented with doing her proper share of church work, and does not cheat some other woman of her opportunity by teaching in the Sunday school, leading the Christian Endeavor, and presiding over the missionary meeting, all in her own person, will escape this danger. She who would preserve her composure, equipoise, and good looks must decide on how much she can do, on when it shall be done, and by whom she shall be assisted.

For the rest, and for all of us, there is no better prescription than that given by St. Paul, in Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks-

giving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

WHEN DAISIES BLOOM

What time in sheets of white and gold, the daisies are in bloom,
Old Nature weaves the sunbeams in the tissues of her loom,
And everywhere, on hill and plain, and by the sparkling sea,
A cloth of gold is spread beneath the winds that wander free.

The dewdrops gem it in the morn, the sunrays gild at noon,
And white as fleece it glimmers in the lustre of the moon.
What time the daisies bloom again the merry earth is young,
And near and far the bannered pomp of Arcady is flung.

The children hold in dimpled hands full many a royal sheaf,
And fringing petals round the disc, each shines a shielding leaf.
Though lavishly the little folk set out for precious spoil,
No loss behind them shows a gap. Forth from the teeming soil

The daisies spring by thousands, and are as the stars above,
As generous as God's bounty, and as marvellous as His love.
And we, who once were children, in the daisy-time grow young,
And sing the praise of One above, in childhood's joyous tongue.

XXI

LOOKING FORWARD

HEN we were children, the stretch of the road from one year to another seemed interminable. Twelve months from one white New Year's Day to the next made an interval that the childish imagination could not grasp. The other end melted away in the dim distance. To the child, the present means everything. The future is so remote that it scarcely impresses him at all. Grown people are always talking to children about improving their opportunities and making the most of their advantages, because by and by they will be men and women, and the time for education, in the school sense of the term, will have gone by forever. How often have I listened to grave speeches, crammed with good advice, and wondered how much of it was accepted and assimi-

lated by the decorous rows of children sitting in front of a platform. A child's life is in today, not in yesterday, and not in tomorrow. A New Year's Day to a child is like any other new and shining and splendid possession. It fills the little heart with gladness to the overflow. If a word is said about next year, it is probably unheard, and certainly it is not long remembered. If a word is said about last year, that, too, is unheard and unnoted, for last year to the child is as the pyramids and ancient Babylon to us.

When the roseate mists of childhood have cleared away, when we are in the thick of affairs, with children of our own, our bread to earn, our work to do, the distance from year to year lessens swiftly, until we think about it as if it were but a few steps. I have tried to analyze for myself the difference in feeling between the old days and the present. I find in my personal experience that I am as happy as ever in the coming of a New Year, and that there is no diminution of tenderness in my good-by to the year that passes away. Just as much as ever, when a New Year comes, I feel the desire to start again, repair mistakes, and enjoy each flying moment.

I pick up my copy of "In Memoriam," and the

poet whose music never loses its spell sings for me, as for you, the dominant mood of the hour:

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The Year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

In the business world, the beginning of a year is signalized by a careful taking account of the stock in hand, so that a new adjustment may be made. Bargains are offered to customers in the shops, so that room may be made on the shelves for fresher and more attractive goods. Merchants must know how they stand. Inventories and precise records show whether there has been advance or decline in profits. January ushers in and prepares for a forward movement in the commerce of nations.

Every individual who has anything to do with

buying and selling—from the head of the firm to the boy in buttons at the door; from the little girl who purchases shoestrings at the notion counter to the great lady who arrives with coachman and footman and spends her gold with lavish hand—has a share in this forward movement of commerce.

The season is a good one for making an inventory of another sort of stock: Are we carrying any useless luggage? Are there closets in the mind that have harbored dark thoughts and old grudges, and that ought to be opened to the light of the new day? Have we been encumbered by a lot of prejudices and traditions that it is not worth our while to entertain longer? Have we been overconfident, a little vain, a little conceited where humility would have better suited our condition? This is not preaching; it is merely suggestion. Possibly we have been lacking in self-esteem—have been too diffident and too readily discouraged. We have stood at the side of the road and watched the procession as it marched along, drums beating, banners waving, eyes alight, lips sternly set, but we have been merely spectators.

Some of us have stayed outside, on the score that we were too young to be of use; and others have apologized for indifference and inertia, because

we thought we were too old. In taking stock of ourselves, let us cease to accept excuses for idleness or laziness. Nothing so mildews conscience, so eats with rust into the tools that should be ours, as a foolish yielding to circumstances that we ought to conquer. I have known a man, in the high noontide of life, reluctant to make another beginning, because he had suffered one defeat. I have seen such a man grow older and feebler till his fabric of life was moth-eaten and fell to pieces, while his daughters toiled for him and, one by one, died beneath the weight of their tasks. In taking stock of ourselves, let us be candid. Whatever the blunders of the past have been, it is never too late to mend. Nobody knows what wonderful gifts are waiting for the brave heart and the willing hand just around the next corner. This is not a dark, gloomy world. It is full of sunshine, brightness, and good cheer. Why indulge in the disposition of self-pity? Why grow morbid and melancholy? To be doleful is to be cowardly. Valor and honor are very near relations. To expect victory is more than half the battle. Be strong and courageous. Withal, watch for fun as you go along. No matter about yesterday. Today is here, and it is a good day.

Speaking of prejudice, its influence is so narrowing and tyrannical that we ought to get rid of it if we can. For example, take the familiar prejudice against making acquaintances out of our own limited circle. Suppose we send our little girl to the nearest public school. It is a good school, and we are satisfied with the instruction she receives there, but we have always had lurking in the background of our thoughts an idea, to put it plainly, of our own social importance. We would not for the world have the child snobbish, and yet we do wish that she may, so to speak, limit her intimate friends to the aristocratic portion of the town. If we see her walking up the street, arm in arm with the daughter of the washerwoman, we are not half so pleased as if she comes home from school with the daughter of the judge. The one girl may be as refined, as well mannered, and as amiable as the other. Nevertheless, we wish Gertrude would select her friends from those whom her mother visits and whose mothers are on the latter's visiting list. This preference is not democratic, nor is it American. It is in the minds of a good many women who shrink from the mere mention of allowing their children to touch anything common. I submit, in the beginning of this year, that caste lines among

children, based on distinction of wealth or any other purely artificial advantage, are weak and sinful. We should train our children so that they may walk the world in purity and innocence; but we should avoid, from the very first, the teaching that will tend to make them selfish, sordid, and snobbish.

Let us look at something else—the foundation of household peace. You may be in apparently perfect health. You may not be aware of the slightest tendency to disease in the physical organism; yet if you have the misfortune to run a needle under your nail, or if you wear a shoe that is a trifle too short, and it gives you what the colored mammies call "a misery in your foot," you will discover that the body is out of gear and the machinery runs with a jar. Every one knows the extremity of wretchedness to which a sufferer may be reduced by an aching tooth. We cannot be physically contented if the least thing in the whole system is out of harmony with the rest of the parts. Very much like this it is in the household. One member of the family who is unreasonable, irritable, and difficult may mar the felicity of parents, brothers,and sisters, and set the sweet bells jangling out of tune, day after day. Perverseness anywhere

in the home, from the kitchen to the drawing-room, is a seed from which grows dissension and downright quarreling. The foundation of household peace is laid in equal rights and liberal privileges for every one and in continual forbearance in little things. Some of us have a genius for setting things right. Others are endowed with an eye for defects, and we blame more than we praise. "When I go away for the day," said a mother to me, "I never leave Helen in charge, if I can help it. I am sure to return in the evening to hear complaints and redress grievances. The boys have misbehaved, the girls have been trying, the baby has cried herself to sleep, and the maid is ready to give warning. There is no exaggeration in this statement, though Helen is a very pearl of discretion and a daughter of whom I am proud; but she dictates and domineers, and is deficient in tact. If I can leave Louise to engineer affairs, the exact opposite happens. The day passes charmingly, every one is happy, and I am told that I might have stayed a week." Upstairs, downstairs, and in my lady's chamber, let us make a place for the genial spirit of good comradeship, and let us live by the beautiful rule written for us long ago by our revered and beloved Dr. Edward Everett Hale:

Look up, and not down;
Look out, and not in;
Look forward, and not back;
And lend a hand.

People never reach their best development, either if they live in loneliness, or if they spend their whole lives in the social whirl. For our soul's growth in goodness, we require time in which to be alone. To the busy mother, with her little ones around her; to the woman who prepares three meals a day; to a third who is driven by social engagements, it seems idle to insist that she shall have an hour or two by herself, between sunrise and sunset. Without this little space of quiet, let it be ever so hard to attain, let me tell my sister that she will cease to thrive mentally and spiritually. She must think enough about herself to claim this privilege and hold it fast; but no one should shut herself up and live apart from her neighbors, unless neighbors are so remote that to reach them she must drive miles across country. In this case the best plan is to find society in books and to cultivate in the family a habit of playing games and uniting in evening amusements.

One day last summer I was driving, with a party of friends, in the mountains, where the road was

often rough and sometimes narrow. Now and then we skirted the verge of a precipice, and were careful to be sure that no team was approaching us there and then from the opposite direction. The path was wide enough for one carriage, but not wide enough for two. After a while we came to a place where we were in doubt whether to turn to the right or the left. Both ways were equally inviting. By taking either we should cross a pleasant upland, and before our eyes a glorious landscape would unfold its almost magic beauty. The point was, however, that we were obliged to reach home before dark, and what we needed to know was which of the two ways would lead us thither safely. Should we turn to the right or the left? We debated among ourselves, and finally we decided that we would choose the road which seemed to be the most frequently traveled, and if we did not reach a mile-stone or a guide-board we would stop at the first farmstead, and ask advice.

A situation similar to this now and then meets us as we fare onward, step by step, over the road of every-day life. Sometimes we jog along over the beaten turnpike of routine. We know precisely where we are, we are very nearly certain what we ought to do. In this period, home-life

is agreeable and delightful. Of necessity, this comfortable, uneventful, and satisfactory time is more or less transitory. By and by we arrive at a corner where two ways meet. Before we reach it, we may or may not have had our rough bits of hillside, our jolting "thank-you-ma'ams," and our dips into valleys of humiliation. These experiences are common to the family in every civilized quarter of the globe. They do us no harm; they add piquancy and flavor to the day's work.

When we arrive at the spot where we must stand still and consider, and make up our minds, either to adhere to the old manner of living or try something new, either to turn definitely to the right or positively to the left, we have need to ask and accept good counsel.

When the clock strikes one in a New Year, the enviable people are those who have no dismay at the thought of fluttering missives that proclaim themselves bills before their envelopes are opened. The wise virgins in the parable who took oil in their vessels with their lamps when they went to meet the bridegroom did not belong to the number of sanguine souls who march gaily forward on the path without heeding certain signals labeled Debt and Danger. I am sure they had no account with the

oil-merchant, but paid him in coin of the realm for the oil with which they filled their lamps. The foolish virgins, who had no oil in their lamps and were doomed to disappointment and despair, belonged to a vast company of optimistic folk who trust to the uncertainties of luck, and order goods for which they cannot pay. There may have been among the foolish ten more than one whose successor can be found among modern men and people who mortgage the future in order to enjoy the pleasures of the present. For these a day inevitably dawns when things cannot go on, when unavoidable reckoning must be made.

In the forcible slang of the day, cut out whatever has been silly and extravagant in the past, and start the future on new lines. The foolish virgins appealed in vain to the wise ones for a share of their oil. The wise and prudent virgins declared that their supply was only sufficient for themselves. There is a deeper underlying spiritual meaning in this parable, spoken for all time as it stands on the sacred page.

Simplicity for some, nevertheless, is as wantonly wasteful as extravagance for others. There is a duty of spending with the open hand, as there is a manifest duty of thrift. Each householder must

determine for himself the exact definition of duty in the case.

I observe that I slipped, naturally, into the use of the masculine pronoun a moment ago. I said "himself," but I include herself. In the conduct of the home, as to the earning, spending, investing, and saving of the income, wife and husband have an equal responsibility. The man has his province, the woman has hers. In William Allen White's remarkable novel, "A Certain Rich Man," we are shown the youthful John Barclay possessing, as a lad, the talents of the successful financier. His instinct is to drive a hard bargain, to get the most for himself, to let the other fellow look out for his end, while he looks out for John Barclay. In the lad's heart there is one soft spot. When he thinks of Ellen, his little sweetheart, the ice melts, and he turns to others with a tenderness foreign to the nature inherited from a money-loving grandfather. Ellen dies, and John Barclay loses from his life for a long time her softening influence.

Sometimes the Ellens do not die. They live and marry the Johns, and somehow in the intimacy of wifehood they do not exert the potential influence they had as sweethearts. Let me give you a

glimpse into actual life. A married pair have lived together rather more than thirty years. Both have passed their fiftieth year. They have children. They have gone far beyond the realization of the wildest hopes, so far as the accumulation of wealth is concerned. They were very poor when they began. The young wife cheerfully endured the privations of her lot and did not complain at the bearing of burdens. Today her husband is worth six millions, and is accounted one of the leading citizens in the community. He allows his wife only the meager sum of one hundred dollars a year, for clothing and incidental expenses, insisting that he fulfils every obligation due to her if he pays her board and lodging and her doctor's bills. He treats his daughters in the same miserly fashion, and there is no end to the embarrassments and hardships he inflicts upon them.

Another woman, intellectual, accomplished, and attractive, will begin this year as she has other years, in the position of a child of ten, although she has a daughter about to be graduated from college. Since the day of her marriage she has never been permitted to purchase a gown, a hat or a pair of stockings for herself. Her husband does the shopping and the ordering for the dress

of the family, for the food on the table, for the rugs on the floor. She has walked miles because she had not five cents or ten cents to pay carfare, though she lives in a sumptuous apartment and wears purple and fine linen.

The gist of the matter is easily discovered. There must have been a time when a married pair who have missed happiness, and lost romance and trampled on sentiment, had the chance of beginning with right instead of wrong ideas. Their theory and practice must have become hopelessly at fault, for surely the original theory had love for its warp and woof, and the practice has become mean and sordid.

In fairness, it must be confessed that mismanagement and injustice are not always to be blamed upon the husband. There are women so dense, inconsequent, and selfish, that their imperious demands ruin their husbands financially. There are those who never understand that a large-sized garment cannot be cut from a tiny pattern of cloth. I have known women whose vanity and social ambition crushed their husbands, or condemned them to a tread-mill existence. Such women are like Rosamond Vincey in George Eliot's "Middlemarch." Her husband bitterly called her his

basil-plant. She had poisoned his life at the fountain. I am thankful to believe that there are hosts of married people whose barque has never struck upon the reef of the pocket-book.

LOYALTY

Whatever you did in the years that are gone,
In the year that is yours today,
Lift up your brow in the light of the sun,
Be loyal and brave, I pray.

Be true to the best that is in your soul,
And follow your high ideal,
And so, as the beautiful seasons roll,
You shall see your dreams grow real.

Be true and dare for the right, my friend,
Fear nothing and dread no blame;
In this brief life, all hastes to an end,
Save only the weird of shame.

The loyal heart is never alone;
There are ever comrades leal,
Who will make the cause you love their own,
And stand by you, staunch as steel.

Steadfast, unswerving, and pure of heart,
Meet shadow and shine, alike,
And shunning only the coward's part,
Learn when to wait, or to strike.

Have thou no care for the years that are gone,
The year that is ours today
Wears fair on its front the light of the sun;
We may labor, and hope, and pray.

XXII

LIFE IN THE SPRING

ARCH is the most strenuous month in the round of the year. March winds have the sound of trumpets. Nature, after the winter's apparent rest, has a thousand things to do, and no time to waste in the doing. Every day shows the delighted spectator a sign of progress. The earliest wild flowers and the bravest flowers of the garden are sure to venture into bloom before the end of this gallant month, as if they had heard beneath the sod the music of his bugle call.

To the housekeeper the month of March comes with the energy and ardor of a vacuum cleaner. Looking out of her windows she sees at work in the world a force that makes for thoroughness. As the lingering drifts of snow melt away, whatever residuum or fragment of debris from sea-

sons past may be lying neglected in forgotten corners, is sure to be dislodged and sent flying into the open. The housekeeper is seized with a desire to begin, at least tentatively, her own radical process of cleansing and renovation, within doors. She will be wise to wait a little longer than inclination prompts, before letting fires go out and starting on the reorganization of closets, attic rooms, and pantries.

Mrs. Browning once wrote to a friend that the atmosphere of early spring in Italy made her think of a razor wrapped in flannel. The comparison is so apt and fitting that we may adopt it as descriptive of our March temper. There is a sharpness under the softness, a lurking hint of the cat's paw beneath the gentle purring, and a possibility of pneumonia and rheumatism, behind the benignant charm of early March, none of which can be safely ignored.

In an old chronicle, in which a poet sang for all time, we find these words: "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

What an exquisite picture of the return of

spring. March came hurrying in to begin the spring house-cleaning. In her sharpest days we saw good omens for the future. The fearless bluebirds came back before he departed. Then April stood in the doorway, all sun and shower, smiles and tears, and with her appeared the vanguard of a long procession of flowers and fruits and waving grain.

In every day we hear the jubilant note of victorious life. The tide keeps rolling in until it floods the world with music, fragrance, and delight. We are aware of a stirring in our blood, a mood of sweet unrest, and a thrill of anticipation, in contrast with the other mood of restraint and patient waiting that held us through the days of cold and storm. For me this feeling finds its expression in a lilting measure of Robert Louis Stevenson:

> The gauger walked with willing foot,
> And aye the gauger played the flute;
> And what should Master Gauger play
> But *Over the hills and far away?*
>
> Whene'er I buckle on my pack
> And foot it gaily in the track,
> O, pleasant gauger, long since dead,
> I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the selfsame way —
The selfsame air for me you play;
For I do think and so do you
It is the tune to travel to.

Who has not known it, that beckoning of the Beyond? Anybody who has sufficient leisure and money in the purse may buy a ticket and go to New York, Halifax, San Francisco, Paris, or Rome. The question of ways and means once settled, there is no difficulty in reaching any objective point on the globe. Too much of our modern travel is mapped out beforehand, arranged for by schedule; so many hours to see this cathedral, so many to drive through this landscape, so many to prowl around among these ancient tombs, and so many to spend in galleries and battlegrounds of the past.

The happy loiterer who may go at will, linger here, tarry there, idle time to spiritual profit, and take his ease at wayside inns, with ever the fluting of the gauger's tune luring him on, is the man whom we may envy. Very likely most of us must be contented with indulging this after-Easter mood, this listening to the siren song, "Over the hills and far away," by taking a little trip to the old homestead up-country, to a city we have never seen, or to a shore where we may hear the boom

of the billows, as they break in white foam far up on the sands.

If we can do nothing more than drop our work and run off for a day's outing, we ought to pack a picnic basket and take a breath of country air where the trees are putting on their first faint green. Poking around among pine needles, we may, perhaps, discover that darling of the Spring, the trailing arbutus. If one can, one should secure for herself the inward blessedness of the hour when all Nature is crying, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

By the way, was Mr. Ingleside very far wrong when he said that the happiest married men in the world were traveling salesmen, because they spent so many delightful week-ends with their wives at home? Everybody knows that the social life of the navy is a dream of perfection, and that the wives of naval officers enjoy perpetual courtship. Do not be so tied to your home, so absorbed in domesticity, that you never leave the shelter of the roof for a single day. There are those who have not a free foot, and whom duty compels to stay where they are. For them, the best counsel is, since they cannot largely change life's landscape, to accept whatever little change may be

within their power. A new book, an evening at the play, or a visit from an old friend, may do much to stimulate and rest flagging enthusiasm and wearied nerves. What most of us greatly need is an occasional relief from the tyranny of accustomed routine.

I was watching a darling little maiden as she played about the floor, busy with her dolls and her toys, and after awhile I noticed that she was puting some of the latter by themselves. "Are those for dolly?" I inquired.

"No," came the answer, without an instant's hesitation, "I am saving them for little bruvver."

In days not very long behind us, the little sister was never told that a little brother, from "over the hills and far away," was coming into the house some morning, to be her very own playmate, her pride, a dearer possession then even her dearest dolly.

Are we less delicate than women used to be, or have we learned a higher wisdom than belonged to the mothers and grandmothers of past centuries?

I can remember scenes of sorrowful surprise, little hearts torn by jealousy while foolish and grown-up people twitted the reigning baby on his

deposition from the throne. Fortunately, the viewpoint has changed. In many homes, no secret is made of the fact that another little one is coming to add to the gladness of the circle. The children do not speak of it, but their hearts brim over with joy that before very long there is to be another baby of whom they may boast; one who in turn will receive first homage.

Each infant born in a family means, on the part of the mother, the giving up of a year to the supreme service of maternity. Of course, she does not wholly devote each moment of the prenatal months to thought of and preparation for the joy that is set before her, nor are the first three months of a tiny life exclusively filled with mother-brooding. Yet, broadly speaking, the year in which a babe is born is a year of sacrifice and of partial seclusion for the mother. It should therefore be, when possible, a year of choice, not of accident, of decision, not haphazard, on the part of the parents. Nature's processes often seem more deliberate otherwhere than in the human family.

A while ago I saw a statement that the Kaiser had offered to educate the eighth child born in each German household. Evidently this most paternal of rulers believes in large families and deplores the

tendency to small ones that seems inseparable from the higher civilization.

Large families are certainly desirable and beautiful, but thoughtful men and women must recognize the fact that they are too costly a luxury if for them the vitality and the long life of the mother is exacted as a price. Equally, if they mean that the father, toiling far beyond his strength, must die in the midst of his days, their cost is excessive. Three years is not too long an interval between the birthdays of successive children.

What a tender and charming idea is presented to us in the word kindergarten! Before the kindergarten, with its little tables and chairs, its clay for modeling, and paper for weaving, there should be another and sweeter kindergarten at home. This begins with the first weeks of infancy and is carried forward by mother and nurse through the earliest months and years. There is no reason why a properly managed infant should force its parents to walk the floor at night to hush its crying. Babies may be taught to observe rules and regulations just as older people do. There is no occasion for sternness and severity in the management of babies. Little children are imitative beings from the hour of the first consciousness, and a mother

who cannot teach them good manners and obedience, without recourse to blows, should take lessons from somebody who has made a study of child nature.

The word discipline really means gentle daily molding and shaping, and has in it nothing of austerity or roughness. It comes from the same root as the word disciple, in which there is not a hint of anything but love. The disciple is the pupil, and it is by discipline that we are taught.

The years fly so fast that we are forever being amazed at the rapidity of their changes. For instance, the other day I was told that a certain Millicent R. was engaged to be married. It happened that I had not seen the girl or her parents in a score of years. When I last saw Miss Millicent, she was a wonderfully pretty child, rosy, dimpled, and sturdy, somewhere between two and three. She had lived out of doors in every sort of weather from the time of her birth. Warmly wrapped up in winter, she had been kept in the open air on the coldest days and amid whirling snow, and, of course, she had breathed the outdoor air all night long. I inquired whether as a girl she was vigorous and beautiful, and the reply was that she had never known a day of illness, was a

miracle of health, a remarkably fine musician, and a college graduate.

The days are past when any of us suffer from slow poison in illy ventilated rooms at night, but are the days wholly past in which children go out as freely in rain and snow as on fine days? Begin with April, if you have been a bit old-fashioned, and see that your children spend as much of their time as they possibly can in the open air. The next Congress of Mothers should seriously take up the subject of shorter hours in the schoolroom. As matters are now arranged, our growing boys and girls get very little sunshine and are shut up at the desks when they ought to be romping in the playground.

The foundation for nervous worry and mental depression is laid for many a girl in the excessive tasks and long hours of confinement in the schoolroom. When the time comes that your daughter is engaged to be married, it will be less important to her to have been proficient in mathematics and logic than to have amasssed a capital of splendid health. Single or married, the girl of today needs for her full development plenty of time for recreation, abundance of fresh air, and plenty of sleep. We forget, in our ambition for our children, for

the boys as for the girls, that forcing processes of every kind are unfortunate in their final results. Why should we rush our boys and girls at railway speed from kindergarten to college, and then into professional and business life, before they are sufficiently mature? Each newcomer on the stage is robbed of the birthright if hurried too rapidly out of youth into the graver tasks of the man and woman.

THE SNOW-DROP'S MESSAGE

One bitter day last winter
In the whirl of blinding snow,
There came to me a letter
From a friend of long ago —
A friend whose home was sheltered
Where sweet the south-winds blow.

Out dropped a little snow-drop,
All white, and shy, and sweet:
It whispered of a country
Where tempests seldom beat:
It told a happy story
Of my dear one's fair retreat.

"There may be storm around you,"
The tiny snow-flower said,
"But do not fear; the summer
Comes swift, with magic tread;
There's always summer somewhere,
And God is overhead."

XXIII

A JUNE TALK

T IS small wonder that June should be the favorite month for weddings. Everything in earth, air, and sky combines to make a perfect setting for the bride, who is the central figure in the wedding procession. She it is who is making the supreme surrender of a woman's life, and at the same moment is arriving at woman's supreme coronation. All that means completion of happiness, all that implies fulness of privilege, all that confers queenliness of prerogative, comes to a woman on the day of her marriage. In a quaint old metrical version of the forty-fifth psalm, we find this stanza:

> She shall be brought with
> gladness great,
> And mirth on every side,
> Into the palace of the king,
> And there she shall abide.

The reference is to the oriental fashion of taking the bride away from her own people and her father's house, and thenceforth merging her wholly into the family of her husband, and the picture in the mind suggests the ancient custom of accompanying the bride with festal music from the home of her childhood to the home of her future lord. The young wife gives up her name and assumes the name of her husband. To him, too, the wedding day is a coronation. In primitive times, the man captured his wife by strength of arms and individual prowess, very likely from an alien tribe. He simply rushed in and secured her from the grasp of others by right of conquest. Today he is supposed to court her ardently, and the longer the siege and the more difficult the winning, the greater is naturally his pride when the time comes for displaying his triumph to the world. Precisely as in the old days, the man often captures his bride from an alien tribe. There is nothing extraordinary in this. Two households may stand side by side on the same street, two families live within hailing distance of one another for years in the same community, and yet have opposite tastes, sentiments, and convictions. The children of each, growing up, may marry and,

until they reach the period of new adjustment, never suspect how antagonistic has been their early training.

This is one reason why the first year of marriage is beset with briars and thorns. Until people actually dwell under the same roof, they do not mutually become acquainted. A single week spent with a friend at a house party does more to promote intimacy or indifference than years of superficial social intercourse. The touch-and-go meetings incidental to teas and receptions are the merest suggestions of personality, but when one sits day after day beside the fire or at the table with a neighbor, each ceasing to be on guard, real understanding begins.

Even heart-opening correspondence, which, to a degree, is in the nature of revelation, does not make people so well acquainted, and is by no means so true a test of disposition and temperament, as is the test of living together. During courtship and betrothal, an engaged pair are on probation. Without effort, each displays qualities of charm that cannot fail to be attractive. The most ordinary speech has a flavor of compliment. The future husband and wife are walking through a land of dreams. Shall the dreams come true?

They sure will if, on both sides, there are fixed principles of honor, justice, and fidelity.

The sooner the two who are hereafter to be one are able to get away by themselves, out of the glare of publicity, the better. Of course, there is many a little bride of June who shall slip quietly away from her pretty home wedding, without press notices, flourish of trumpet, published descriptions of her dress and that of her bridesmaids, and a detailed list of her wedding presents, into the tender sweetness of her new life. Society asserts a claim upon the privacy of the honeymoon today, and reporters are too often on the trail of the bride and groom. There is no appreciable reason why bridal roses should be wafted about in the limelight. If ever happiness has a right to exact seclusion of itself, it is on the wedding day. Why, then, should obtrusive crowds obstruct the pathway to a church, and strangers violate the rules of ordinary courtesy, by pushing in where they are not invited, in a civilized country like ours? When Charles Dickens wrote "Martin Chuzzlewit," an indignant protest went up from American readers. Whoever shall take "Martin Chuzzlewit" down from the shelf and re-read it must acknowledge, in fairness, that simi-

lar criticisms to those made by the great novelist would not caricature us today.

Thanks to the general intelligence of young women, to domestic training in schools, and good management at home, most brides find comparatively little difficulty in solving the problem of housekeeping. The most disastrous mistakes are not made by girls who have been brought up on a lavish scale, and who leave a background of liberality in expenditure and begin their housekeeping on a small income. The girl who has never had to consider ways and means at home, and who steps without much delay from the platform of her college graduation to life in a bit of a cottage or a tiny apartment, is often far more successful in her new rôle than the girl who has been a small wage-earner from the time she left school until her marriage day. In certain communities, where a local industry, as the manufacture of shoes or gloves, occupies most of the marriageable women, or where a great many of the young girls are factory operatives, it is a matter of comment that these young women do not seem to take easily or successfully to housekeeping. Their time has been arranged by an iron-cast schedule. They have worked every day and all day in a round of monotonous toil, doing

one thing over and over, and the result is that they do not know how to do several things at their own discretion. They do not know how to purchase provisions, to cook, or to sew. The bride of poverty often continues to make mistakes in the line of waste, until her husband and herself are equally discouraged. The girl who steps from a home of wealth has had opportunities of change, observation, and an all-round education, which for her are valuable assets. Such a girl may marry a man whose salary of fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars a year is altogether in contrast with the large income of her father; and, if need be, and she is sensible and capable, she will keep within her income, do her own work, and prove herself a notable housekeeper, to the surprise, it may be, of her mother.

Whenever possible, the newly married should make their start by themselves. If little occasion for friction arise, if there is the least jar in the harmony, the disturbance will be slight and peace will quickly return if the two are not subjected to interference from a spectator. The mother of John and the mother of Mary are both welcome guests in the home of the children. They should come to it as guests—not, if it can be helped, as inmates.

Few and far between are the men and women who know when to speak and when to be silent, if they are relations-in-law. Men, to be sure, are less objectionable than women, when domiciled under the roof of a newly married pair, yet a mere man has not always the wisdom of Solomon. The sins of a man in this connection are apt to be those of omission. "Uncle Tom," writes one of my correspondents, "passes the postoffice on his way from business, and, as he is a miracle of absent-mindedness, he not only forgets that he has been there and forgets to give me my letters when he comes in, but keeps them in his pocket for days at a time. 'Did you call at the office?' I will ask. 'Why, no,' he answers, in all good faith, and this although he did call and at the very time has my letter from home in the breast of his coat." The presence of the third person in the house detracts from the privacy which is so much to be desired in the beginning of a home. For this reason, it is not a good plan, if it can be avoided, to eke out the income by taking in lodgers or boarders. When economy must be studied, let the paring down be made upon rent or other expenditure. Two people who are young need not be afraid to let their world know that they are living simply. Whenever prac-

ticable, as soon as may be, it is well, in view of the future, for husband and wife to invest in the soil. The amount paid for rent startles the tenant when it is summed up at the expiration of a few years. The possession of a home may involve a great deal of self-denial during the first years, but in the end it pays for every struggle.

The four beautiful years of college life close in June, and thousands of our young people will always be the happier for their associations and memories. No years in a lifetime glide away more swiftly, none are more prophetic, and none more certainly stamp their ineffaceable impression upon youth. The hall-mark of the university is to be seen upon the alumni to the end of their lives. A broad, deep line of demarcation divides the undergraduate from the one who, having fulfilled the prescribed curriculum, receives the farewell and benediction of his alma mater. The alumnus steps at once into a bewildering world of action. For both sexes, indeed, the experience is the same.

The boys and girls whom parents watch with so much innocent pride are presently to be in the center of activities very different from those of the classroom. Still, the classroom has given them their best preparation for earning a livelihood,

mingling with men, and becoming useful members of society. The ability to make quick decisions, recognize the rights of others, and work steadily toward an ultimate goal are the best gifts that a college confers upon its students. As for the education, either scientific or classic; as for the mathematics and psychology and philosophy through which the young students have plodded, their net result may be summed up in a single word: Discipline. Ten or twenty years hence, a large part of what the schools teach will inevitably be lost from the mind; but the mind will not lose its facility in working, its receptivity, and its power to weigh and measure whatever is set before it, whether it be a theory or a fact. Meanwhile, although we scarcely understand it, and although the thing has been said over and over for centuries, we may again be pardoned for repeating that the great men and great women of the next generation are passing across the stage when the young people receive their beribboned diplomas.

The splendid statesman of the hour was once a callow youth; the great surgeon took his first lesson in anatomy; the novelist wrote a composition and handed it in for the teacher's correction, and the poet whose songs are sung around the globe

was a little fellow, reproved because he was a dreamer of dreams. As we lament the annual dropping out of sight of those who have been foremost in achievement and highest in eminence, we console ourselves by the knowledge that the world's work never stops. The bright June days remind us that there are rising as well as setting suns.

It would amuse the girl who wears her cap and gown on commencement day this summer, if she could have a peep at the past and see with what misgivings thoughtful people in a remoter age regarded the higher education of women. There was once a time when it was no disgrace for a gentlewoman to misspell words in her correspondence. She was not an ignoramus, nor were her manners open to criticism, even though she blundered in writing her mother tongue. Her day was two hundred years ago, and ever since then the path of her daughters and theirs and theirs has been upward and onward. At present you are not only allowed to study whatever you choose; you are expected to compete with your brothers, to be their rivals, and hold your own at their side, from your entrance examinations until you are rewarded by the diploma of your alma mater. This is the same whether you are co-eds or students in a col-

lege devoted to women alone. It is to me a reason for thankfulness that you are not likely to be blue-stockings so long as you play tennis and basket-ball, and enjoy splendid health.

If our daughters step out into the world of activity, enter business life, support themselves independently, and meet the emergencies of the modern world, they do so because they have had the advantage of development for a longer period than used to be the privilege of women. A fair proportion of our highly educated women become wives and mothers and homemakers, and they succeed in this complex and absorbing rôle of household government all the better for having been students at Smith, or Wellesley, or Vassar, or Randolph and Macon, or Leland Stanford, or anywhere else on this great continent.

A pleasant feature of college life for women is sometimes seen in the summer conferences and summer schools which, either for study or for comparison of methods in future work, assemble large bodies of young women from different colleges at a single selected place. Here one sees at a glance the points of difference and the points of contact in our various American colleges for girls.

Several years ago, before American women in

large numbers had been suffered to undertake undergraduate work in German universities, a Berlin professor rubbed his eyes and shook his head when a young friend of mine asked admission to his classes. It seemed to him impossible that a fraülein could study as the boys did, make any progress, and not fail to lose caste as a feminine being. We have changed all that, and numbers of our girls will complete their studies, if they wish, under the auspices of a foreign university.

Perhaps they will pardon a caution about the mother and father who have already given up a good deal of their society, and who would like to have the pleasure of enjoying daughters at home for a while. Here, too, is a home problem. I fancy that it has more than one aspect.

Fathers and mothers who are bearing the burdens of middle life often need the assistance of daughters as well as of sons in bringing up the younger children. The girl who has been graduated often devotes a large part of her salary, when she becomes self-supporting, to aiding the home people in educating brothers and sisters. When there is no such demand, when a girl may as well as not be just a home daughter, why should she not give her parents the pleasure of her compan-

ionship for a while before she seeks her own pleasure in further research and investigation along lines of study that attract her?

Are we less hospitable than of old? Perhaps; yet I hope the spirit of hospitality is the same. Elderly people remember very well a time when migration in the summer was by no means universal. Visits between relatives in town and country were usual and delightful. Ask your Aunt Matilda, as she placidly looks up from her book, if she does not recall the hospitalities of her mother's house when she was a girl. "Yes," she will say, "fifty years ago, we sometimes had twenty at the table at once, when my sisters came home with their children, and we girls were accustomed to give up our rooms and tuck in together or sleep on a sofa downstairs, and we thought nothing of it as a sacrifice of comfort." The migrations of June have changed in character. From the fervid heat of the towns, babies and little children must be carried for long periods at the shore or in the hills.

Somehow the old homesteads and the grandparents and the ample hospitality of the country cousins have vanished, and we pay as we go, and write to one another in joyful terms when we find

an inn somewhere in Arcadia, a cottage by the sea, a haven in the woods where we may camp a while, let the children grow, and take our ease as paying guests. This, too, is as it should be — the country giving the town so much the year around that a stream of gold ought, in very justice, to flow backward in summer from the town to the country.

Blessings on the kind-hearted, motherly women who open their homes during the summer and give food and shelter, rest and refreshment, to weary city dwellers. Money does not pay for all they are ready to give. The thoughtless small boys who invade precincts where they have no business, and the older visitors who are needlessly wasteful of the time of their hostess by coming late to her laden table in the season when she has most to do, should alike be more considerate. Instead of overmuch criticism, the June flittings ought to be prolific of a better understanding between women who come together for a while, and who sometimes thus begin lasting friendships.

Among the friends whom I personally prize most are those under whose friendly roofs I have had entertainment and courtesy not to be valued in the scales of the market during lovely summer days. To receive paying guests in summer is often

to put into practice the qualities of which St. Paul was thinking when he wrote to his friends that they were called to be saints. There are many transactions in this world into which money enters, but there are few in which it may more graciously enter than in the relation between the summer hostess and her guests.

THE ORIOLE'S NEST

Swing high, swing low,
Where the zephyrs go
On their beautiful errands, to and fro,
Cradled so fair
In the summer air,
Where the green leaves throng
Amid sheen and song,
You shall not find, in a long day's quest,
A fortress stronger, a lovelier nest.

Suspended high
Between earth and sky,
Where the stars look down with steadfast eye,
Woven in strands
And careful bands,
Hollowed and lined
As skill inclined;
Far though you roam, you shall never see
A prettier home for a family.

In a cavalier's coat,
With defiant note
Poured from fearless, challenging throat,
The Oriole sits
At his door, or flits
Hither and yonder, in urgent mood,
To bring for his wife and the clamorous brood
The morsels they ask.
'Tis a yeoman's task,
But a bird of state
May toil for his mate,
And there's wonderful love like a flag unfurled
In that wee little home in the great big world.

Swing high, swing low,
Where the breezes blow,
And the rains go slanting to and fro.
Cradle of melody,
Rocked like a summer sea,
Up where the ripples of air and sun
Mingle and criss-cross, and meet and run,
And we shall not find in a week-long quest
A prettier sight than an Oriole's nest.

XXIV

MEETING SUMMER PROBLEMS

UMMER problems annually confront us with the familiar faces of old friends. If we take them too seriously, they seem to us like ancient enemies. The heat, the mosquitoes, the swarming flies, the coming and going of servants, the laundry work, and all other sources of anxiety, crowd out of our minds the beauty of garden and lawn, the delight of short excursions, and the open-air freedom of the season. Shall we go somewhere across the wide ocean; back to the old homestead; into the little valley where we went to school, or shall we tarry at home by the stuff? Are our goods and chattels an embarrassment, or shall we deposit the silver in the bank and start on pilgrimage with a free foot?

What shall we do with the house if, as a family,

we wish to settle elsewhere than at home for a time? How are we to reconcile the diverging tendencies and temperaments of different members of the family? One daughter likes people and cities, hates roughing it in the woods, and yearns for good clothes and gaiety. Another pines for the precise opposite. The problem of the full purse, or the scanty one, must be duly considered.

Suburbanites have learned that to make both ends meet they may give weary city folk the chance of dwelling in their homes with all their manifold advantages during the midsummer days. Dwellers in town sublet their apartments for the season, and transient travelers thus accommodated affirm that there are worse places than the city in which to stay in July. We all meet our problems, and every summer we solve them again.

The woman who rents her furnished house for the summer may deprecate the idea that others are sleeping in her beds, reading her books, and handling her china; but if the transaction has been arranged strictly on business principles, in a majority of cases she will finally return to a house as clean as when she left it, with little injury accruing from wear and tear.

Mr. Rankeillor, in conversation with David Bal-

four, after the latter's return from the perilous adventures into which he had been thrown when kidnaped by the nefarious chicanery of his miserly Uncle Ebenezer, uttered a memorable truth: "Now, Mr. David, they talk a great deal of charity and generosity; but, in this disputable state of life, I often think the happiest consequences seem to flow when a gentleman consults his lawyer, and takes all the law allows him."

It is chiefly sentiment which opposes itself to the purely commercial transaction of renting one's home for the summer.

Occasionally, when one is filled with gratitude for the goodness of God shown to her in the possession of a beautiful home, while others, equally deserving, are forced to live in stuffy rooms, with little air and sun, she feels that she ought to put her thankfulness to the test by installing some of these in her home while she leaves it.

The kind impulse is sometimes carried out successfully, and sometimes causes a reaction of feeling leading to a later hardening of the heart. For example, my friend, Miriam, who paints miniatures and writes poetry, has gradually made for herself, in a cozy apartment, a home which expresses in every nook and corner the charm of her

personality. One summer, she was going to Normandy for a three months' sojourn. She found among her less fortunate acquaintances two young women who were not able to leave town during the summer, and who had no anticipation of so much as a week's holiday. She said to them: "Come and live in my home while I am gone. All that I will ask of you will be to take good care of my bird and keep my plants daily watered. You may freely use everything that I have. I have engaged a woman to come in at stated intervals to do the cleaning for you, and I want you to feel, while I am gone, as if this home were your own."

When Miriam came back, her bird-cage was empty, and she was told that a prowling cat had eaten her canary; her palms were withered, and her other plants were dead; her most cherished books had been despoiled by careless usage; her china had been chipped at the edges, and the whole apartment seemed to have been tenanted by vandals.

The outgoing inmates behaved as if they had done her a favor, and she had treated them with injustice; and, altogether, her benevolent experiment proved in reality to have been a dreary failure.

My friend, Mrs. X, going with her family on a trip around the world, similarly placed her ample home, near Central Park, at the disposal of a family of gentlewomen, consisting of a widowed mother and three spinster daughters. These people were supposed to be the salt of the earth. Two of the daughters had been successful teachers. The house, with all it contained, was freely given them, for their occupation, for a year and a half.

When the X's at last returned, they discovered that their friends had exercised a large hospitality to kindred with troupes of reckless children. They were themselves obliged to take up their abode in a hotel, while the house was renovated from attic to cellar, and at least one floor was entirely refurnished before Mrs. X could persuade herself to live in her home again.

The summer problem of what to do with the home, when one leaves it for the season, must be settled by the individual. Against one feature I must raise my voice.

American men are proverbially self-forgetful and generous. A husband and father may be compelled to continue the daily grind with only a week or fortnight's holiday; but, if he be a tolerably successful business man, he will send his wife and

children to Maine, or the Adirondacks, or Mackinac, or whatever resort is the one most alluring or desirable to the people of his section.

This is a big country, and there are many places extremely tempting to those who can afford a summer change of scene. The choice generally depends on the age of the children. While the children are under twelve, they go with their mother preferably to a farmhouse, where they may have simple country pleasures and an excellent table. A brook to fish in, a barn with its mysterious lights and shadows, rides with the farmer on loads of hay, flowers to gather in sunny meadows, make the children ideally happy, while their mother sits and crochets on the veranda, and their father sends the weekly check for the board. When he can manage it, he runs out from town on Saturday, to stay over Sunday, and catch an early train to town on Monday morning. When the children become young people, they wish other enjoyments and clamor for another background, and the parents secure it for them, if they can.

In the meantime, the husband, left alone at home, has a weary time of it. One man whom I remember wrote to his wife that in the morning, when he was dressing, he could hear the flies walking on

the ceiling, the house was so forlornly still. No one should be left entirely alone in a house at night. There is always the possibility of sudden illness and the danger of weakness too great to reach a telephone.

Young men obliged to peg away in the office should have a mother or sister to stay with them, to give the home feeling and the home care; and if there are no women in the family who can thus take turns in ministry, an arrangement should be made by which the comfort and well-being of the grown-up boy will be provided for. The custom of leaving the men of the household in solitude during the summer does not commend itself as either sensible or sane.

There are countries in which it would almost seem that the man of the house is too much considered; but, in ours, he is far too often practically looked upon as the man who pays the bills and furnishes the luxuries that have grown to be indispensable, in the opinion of his wife and daughters. If it be true, as more than one observer has said to me, that American men prematurely break down under the strain of their bread-winning, and that many of them do not survive their fifties, it behooves the women to whom they are dear to dis-

cover the weak point in the machinery of living and apply a remedy.

"I am sending both my boys into camps this summer," said the mother of two wide-awake and particularly restless young Americans. One of these lads was twelve and the other ten. They happened to be of opposite temperaments and were disposed to be more quarrelsome than the mother approved.

"My husband and I talked it over," she said, "and, after investigation and a great deal of thought, we decided that the boys would be the better friends and comrades in the autumn if they were separated in the summer. Wilfred is going into camp in Vermont, and Dick will be sent, under the care of an old classmate of his Uncle Tom, to a camp on Long Island. In the meantime, we ourselves are planning a pleasant excursion, and I mean, so far as I can, to drop the burden of anxiety about my boys. I say 'the burden' because I seldom get rid of it unless they are asleep. Wilfred is given to what the boys call 'scraps.' He goes about with a chip on his shoulder, and is happiest when he can fight with another boy. His brother is much more tractable, and he lets Wilfred impose upon him. We think the little fellows

will get more out of the summer by spending it in camp than they will with us."

The summer camp, under the care of an instructor who understands boy nature, is one of the safest and best places to which a boy can be sent. The discipline of the camp, in promptness, punctuality, and adherence to a few rules, develops excellent qualities in the ordinary boy. The woodcraft, swimming, fishing, and sailing, which form the most conspicuous part of camp life, are thoroughly enjoyable, and the finest feature of all is the growth in courage, self-reliance, and manliness made by the boy in this healthful outdoor life.

CHURCH-BELLS IN THE COUNTRY

Solemn and sweet, o'er hill and fell,
I hear the call of the old church bell,
Pealing in tones so loud and clear,
And telling listeners far and near
That heaven hath claims on earth today:
"Come, learn to walk in the narrow way."

Silence enfoldeth field and mere;
The very ripples flow softly here;
No sound of tool on the farm is heard,
But high in the tree-tops flutes a bird;
With answer brave to the bell's deep note,
On the hush of the air its love-songs float.

Sleepers who lie in God's Acre low,
Under the daisies, under the snow,
Once at the sound of this bell made haste —
No time was theirs, or is ours, to waste;
The bell has a triumph chord for them —
A joyful thought, not a requiem.

Ah, careless heart, wherever you stay,
Heed the message, nor turn away;
For over your life, like a spirit of peace,
Broodeth a love that shall never cease;
Kneel in the quiet old church, and seek
The presence of God for another week.

In the manifold noise of the rushing town
There is much the call of the church to drown;
But wheresoever are pasture-lands,
And a thought of the church not made with
hands,
Solemn and sweet comes the bell's deep word,
And blesséd are they who its call have heard.

XXV

THE DISCONTENT OF THE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

IDDLE age in woman's life is a debatable territory. Some reach it earlier than others; some never seem to arrive at the outposts, gliding across its boundary lines as if they were nonexistent; while others again tarry long on its level ground, in the sunshine or the shadow, according to their temperament. A few, with whom youth lingers imperiously until it is suddenly blighted by the frost of old age, are not to be congratulated. The fortunate contingent to whom middle age is an Indian summer of serene activity and happy harvesting are among the elect, the thrice blessed of the world.

Whether the middle-aged woman be a laundress or a princess, if she is satisfied with her lot, if she have unruffled nerves, devoted friends, and a confi-

dent outlook, she is a little more than an ordinary woman; she is in reality a great lady.

On the wall of my room hangs the picture of my mother, who lived to her seventy-fifth year. In the picture she wears a white lace cap and a quaint kerchief. She assumed these dignities when she was thirty, and never laid them off. I have not the least doubt that in her beautiful thirties she fancied herself to be middle-aged. Years ago—to be accurate, very soon after the Civil War—I was sitting in my sunny drawing-room in a Southern town, when, bright as the morning itself, a friend opened the door and greeted me with the remark, "This is my birthday. I just couldn't wait. I had to run in and tell you that I have said good-by to my youth. I am now middle-aged. I am thirty-one. I have a daughter ten years old. I must now begin to anticipate her growing up. I have had my day."

The dear little lady wrote to me a twelvemonth ago, and she does not feel so old today as she did on the day when she was thirty-one. I am aware how absurd this must sound to women in their early thirties. It even sounded absurd to me when I heard it, although I combated her opinion and laughed at the tragi-comic solemnity of her face.

The truth is that women accepted early middle age as their destiny in the days when most girls married in the later teens. Added to this, it has come to pass, through a saner comprehension of the laws of health and by reason of a change in our American fashion of handing social functions over to the young, as if only they were entitled to a share in social intercourse beyond the home, that women in general are today as young at fifty as they used to be at thirty. At fifty I suppose we may frankly admit that, whether or not she looks her age, a woman has touched her meridian.

If she be a person of cheerful yesterdays and confident tomorrows, she ought to feel no pang of discontent. Her trouble, however, is not so much with the cheerful yesterdays as with the confident tomorrows. She dreads the blank of the future. I shall never forget the sad cadence in the voice of a woman who had always taken a conspicuous and almost indispensable share in church work, in the various phases of domestic management, and, in brief, in the affairs of her world, as she said, with an air of finality: "When a woman is fifty years old, there is nothing more for her to do anywhere. The only thing that remains for her is to die."

There was absolutely not the faintest edge of an excuse for the cloud which had settled upon her life, blotting the sunshine with its blackness and blinding her to the fact, obvious to every one else, that she was more dearly loved than ever; that husband and children needed her, and that no one within her circle was ready to do without her. In her case the cloud never lifted. Its baleful shadow was rift now and then, but the sun did not come back to stay. I can think of one and another, and another, among women in their rich maturity, fully equipped to meet every demand, far more attractive than they were before experience had laden them with sheaves, who still failed to see the glory and beauty of middle age. I have learned to know unerringly and to fear in a woman's face a certain faraway look, as if life had lost flavor and zest, as if nothing more could happen and nothing more were worth while, and nervous prostration had stormed life in the citadel and laid it low.

A year ago I asked a physician, whose work had been almost exclusively among nervous women, to tell me from what ranks the majority of the victims came. The answer was, "From the middle-aged." Proceeding further, I was told that the

infringement upon health at that period lying back of the discontent that accompanied the nervousness was caused with us by the intensity of the sex, by lack of tranquillity, by monotony, by drudgery, by undertaking too much, by this, that, and the other, all of which might be condensed into a single sentence: Women suffer from discouragement or disillusionment when they reach middle age. They are discontented, and then they break down.

Insomnia, a pain in the back of the neck, an inability to think consecutively, and a sense of flatness everywhere, existence wholly flavorless, the outlook dreary—these are among the baleful atmospheric effects that combine to make the middle-aged woman weary of her lot. She has had too much drudgery; she has been chained by routine. Gradually or suddenly she arrives at the breaking point. A chronic discontent drifts into chronic depression.

Where shall we seek a remedy for this situation? It must be conceded as of course that there are many who require no remedy. Those who do crowd the sanatoriums, distress their families, and, worst of all, permit themselves to be laid upon the shelf long before the time when they may rightly

claim exemption from active duty. A bit of conversation which was repeated in my hearing one day is pertinent here:

"Don't ask me to serve on the reception committee," said a woman who, by reason of long service, felt that she could insist upon relief from duties in which she had been conspicuous and successful. "I am laid on the shelf. Go to some one else."

"Who laid you on the shelf?" was the question put to her by a practical friend.

There was an instant's hesitation, and then came the answer: "Why, the Lord, I suppose."

"I don't believe He did," said the other; "and even if He did, you have rested there long enough. The Lord doesn't mean you to rust, and you would better step down."

So far as observation and experience may be called upon to testify, I am convinced that the middle-aged woman fosters the discontent that drags her down by giving up to it when it first looms upon the horizon. She may fight and vanquish it in one of two ways: She may keep steadily on, holding her own and continuing to do her best, or she may pause. There is a sentence in Isaiah which many women ought to keep as a per-

manent inscription before their eyes, in the days when they begin to feel the obsession of tedium; when hurry and worry, twin imps of Satan, prick them daily, or when they foolishly consent to be swept aside by the influx of the younger generation: "Their strength is to sit still." Read it, ponder it, and take it home to yourself, if you are tempted to discontent. Whether you are the mother of sons and daughters; whether you are a single woman, occupied with teaching or business, or very much at leisure; whether you are in comfortable health or not entirely strong—change the pronoun, substitute "your" for "their." Your strength is to sit still. Take whatever opportunities for rest come into your day. Cease being a saint. Saints need vacations once in a while. Never mind the heaped-up stocking basket, nor the dainty frocks for the pretty daughter, nor the garments that must be collected for the needlework guild, nor the necessity for strenuous housekeeping. By the way, is the last a necessity? Try, although it may outrage your standards, for the next six months to be a trifle blind and deaf to petty irritations. Take life easily. Make it a rule to rest an hour or two every afternoon.

I can hear a chorus of opposing voices, and I

am familiar with the objections that seem insuperable when this plain rule of safety is recommended to the tired woman of middle age. "Who is to undertake the tasks that I neglect? What will the house look like, if I act upon your advice? How shall I be fair to my daughter at college or my daughter in society, if I sit still and bind burdens upon her?" I have heard these questions and many like them, and I reply that a cheerful, mirthful, entirely contented mother is of more value to her children; a bright, alert, and sympathetic wife of more value to her husband than a worn-out, exhausted, and depressed woman can possibly be in these relations. Believe me, you will be fairer to everybody if only you will consent to be fair to yourself.

Live vividly in the present. "The darkest day lived till tomorrow will have passed away." Take the moments as they come. "Build a little fence of trust around today." Read bright, entertaining books, and don't imagine that you are wasting your time when a good novel grips you and holds you fast. Discourage all pessimistic conversation. If people try to make you think that the world is growing worse, don't listen to them. The world is steadily growing better. So far as your future is

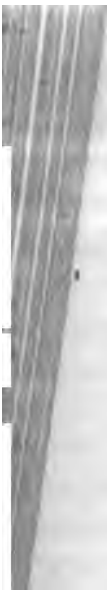
concerned, it is going to be better than anything you have yet known. Read the right wisdom of Rabbi Ben Ezra. There are no years so sweet with calm weather, so rich in friendship, so charming in melody, and so intimately connected with the beautiful hereafter, as the years into which we women walk over the upland of middle age.

A HAPPY THOUGHT

No doubt there are losses and crosses,
  And sorrows that leave a smart;
But this is a thought of courage
  To lighten the heavy heart:
Friends whom we never have met,
Joys we shall never forget,
Wealth that shall ours be yet,
  Of our life's long day are a part.

Good things are coming to meet us,
  Gladness is looking this way;
Good folk are hasting to greet us;
  After our work will come play.
So we need not be drooping and low;
We may hold up our heads as we go,
And the cup that shall overflow
  Will sweeten the end of the day.

GROWING OL



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A young girl in the exquisite bloom of eighteen had completed her studies at what used to be called a finishing school, and, wishing to put her education to the practical test of wage-earning, she sought a position as governess. It happened that a confidential letter of recommendation, not intended for her perusal, was sent her by a perfidious friend. The letter, as a whole, was pleasing, but it contained one sentence that fell on her acutely sensitive mind like a blister, and left a scar in memory. The sentence was to this effect: "Miss Betty is well qualified to undertake the tuition of children under twelve, but she has the disadvantage of being young, and her appearance indicates her youth." The sting was in the final summing up of the situation. The girl told me that whenever she looked in the glass she searched for some faint pucker between her brows, frowned at the roundness of her cheeks, and hated her dimples, while she arranged her hair in every unbecoming way that was possible to its abundance, trying vainly to overcome that fatal blight, an appearance of youth.

In the charming monograph entitled "My Father," by Sir William Robertson Nicoll, there is related an amusing little incident that is appro-

priate here: "My father took an active part in the election of Robertson Smith to the Chair of Hebrew in the Free Church College at Aberdeen. One difficulty was Smith's youth; he was only twenty-two. To Smith's great indignation, an erring newspaper announced that he was twenty-one. Smith resolved to have an apology, but my father got over the difficulty by getting in a paragraph which put the fact of his age in the most favorable light. It contained the words: 'Mr. Smith, who is now, we understand, in his twenty-third year.'" Twenty-one, indeed, when the professor was past twenty-two! We may smile at Mr. Smith's exasperation, but if we are beyond the meridian we quite understand it.

When do we begin to grow old? Manifestly, some of us never were young. Manifestly again, some of us never do grow old, in any proper sense of the word. It is a painful thing to be fifty, sixty, or seventy, with no broader outlook, no richer imagination, and no fresher interest, than one had at twenty. Charles Dickens anticipated the camera in relentless fidelity of reproduction, when he introduced Arthur Clennam, after a lapse of years, to his former sweetheart, Flora Casby.

"Flora, always tall, had grown to be very broad,

too, and short of breath; but that was not much. Flora, whom he had left a lily, had become a peony; but that was not much. Flora, who had seemed enchanting in all she said and thought, was diffuse and silly. That was much. Flora, who had been spoiled and artless long ago, was determined to be spoiled and artless now. That was the fatal blow.

"'This is Flora.'

"'I am sure,' giggled Flora, tossing her head with a caricature of her former manner, such as a mummer might have presented at her own funeral, if she had lived and died in classical antiquity, 'I am ashamed to see Mr. Clennam; I am a mere fright; I know he'll find me fearfully changed; I am actually an old woman; it's shocking to be found out—it's really shocking.'" The ingénue, with her naïve simplicity and baby graces, delights us when we meet her in "Cometh Up as a Flower"; but when the flower has gone to seed and the once lovely charmer has changed into a skeleton in armor, like the immortal Mrs. Skewton, we are aware of an instinctive repulsion.

To bring the question directly to the personal issue, when do we begin to grow old? In so far as our own consciousness is involved, on the day

when we are for the first time a bit elated at being told that we have not altered a feature nor changed an iota in the last ten years. "How young you look! I should have known you anywhere," is an unerring token of the fact that Time is recording his innings.

The high-water mark of beauty and distinction in personal charm is reached by woman at thirty or thirty-five. Between thirty and fifty, life is full of excitement, interest, and opportunity. Unless interrupted by ill health, the average man and woman may be counted upon for the best work in this period. In the forties, the tendency to inertia is noticed occasionally, and people of sluggish temperaments, or those who have been disappointed in their hopes and plans, should guard against inactivity. It is the first flag, not of middle, but of old age. Work is a life preserver. Above all, forget self in some unselfish service.

Middle age is a beautiful Indian Summer, a sunny upland, often the coronation of a lifetime. When young people are growing up in a home, the parents in midstream of the forties are young enough to be the comrades of their children. Now and then we meet a grandmother still young and beautiful in her middle age. She will hardly be

old if she live to be a great-grandmother. Time is very kind to some of us.

One and all, however, we are foredoomed to a shock as sudden and unexpected as the shock of an accident on a railway. One moment we are riding swiftly in a parlor car, gliding on through a landscape that smiles as we pass, and the next there is a head-on collision, and where are we? When we gather ourselves together and ascertain that we are unhurt, though around us may be wreck and ruin, our nerves are not tranquil, and we are not precisely the same easy-going travelers today that we were yesterday. Sometimes the shock comes to the man who answers an advertisement, and to whom it has not occurred that he is in any way disqualified to undertake duties that he understands.

"We are looking for a young man," say the people to whom he applies, and he steps out from the office to the street, with his world in fragments and himself disillusionized.

A woman who has not been accustomed to think of herself as old is ruthlessly illuminated on the subject by a plain-spoken plumber or vegetable-man or gardener, who asks if he may speak to that old lady.

Here is disillusionment that may be borne if one have a sense of humor. But when an elderly person is not very well and goes to her doctor, and he frankly tells her that after fifty she may not take a Turkish bath, that she must not run for a car, and that she would better avoid elevated trains, there is disillusionment again that is less patiently endured. Perhaps her eyes begin to serve her with some abatement of faithfulness, and she makes an appointment with a skilled oculist. His first question is, "How old are you?" and if she be anywhere beyond sixty, she understands without his telling her that though she may receive aid from treatments and advice, and well-chosen lenses, still she cannot hope for a cure. Time, the Silent, has stolen a march upon her, and she is cheerfully to accept the fact.

Woman or man may as well adjust the mental condition to the claims of circumstance. Accept the situation without a struggle or complaint. The best that can be done mentally is to ignore Time, and try to receive each day as if it brought gifts, instead of turning them away. It is well to meet Time at the point of least resistance. To maintain a losing battle is absurd, when the odds are against us; when, too, we may easily turn defeat

into victory by accepting graciously each moment as it comes.

There are gains that make up twice and thrice for all our losses. Everywhere, friends and helpers spring to the assistance of one who is frankly old, and therefore not ashamed.

Rich harvestings of sympathy, of experience, and of ability to console and counsel, come to us as we grow older. Youth is intolerant and severe. Those who have grown old, without repining and discontent, have learned a large charity that is winning and attractive. The confidantes of young people, in their days of courtship and in all their affairs of the heart, are oftener grandparents than parents.

As a barrier against the encroachments of Time, nothing is so trustworthy as forgetfulness that he is near. The arm that is unused becomes atrophied; powers of the brain suffered to lie dormant fall into decay; whoever would remain young in spirit would do well to keep straight along on the road hitherto traveled. To resign an accomplishment, to abandon a favorite pursuit, to drop a task on the score of increasing years, is an error, unless the years have brought with them feebleness. Memory will not prove treacherous

if something be committed to it daily, in age as in youth. Waning enthusiasms, narrowness, and depression, follow in the wake of idleness as one grows old. Remember that there is a charm of gray hairs as of golden tresses, and that each is beautiful in its season.

As a rule, the business of growing old is sadly beset with difficulties, through the assiduous efforts of the juniors to prevent the seniors from going about in the freedom they love. Mother and aunty and grandfather do not take kindly to being escorted hither and yon, as if they were infants in perambulators, or young girls in need of a chaperone. A great deal of superfluous care is lavished upon old people, who would conduct their concerns to much better purpose if they were let alone.

Two dear old dames went on a visit one summer, and were entertained in the home of a favorite niece. Both were matrons who had spent the years of a lifetime in a rural village, where it was taken for granted that they would go and come at their discretion. They were puzzled to find themselves waited upon at every hand, and to learn that it was thought unsafe for them to make little excursions unless a younger person

were at liberty to accompany them. One morning, after breakfast, they announced that they were going to take a walk. This was thought to be an innocent proceeding, and they set off unmolested. An hour later, when the niece was beginning to be alarmed and uneasy, an expressman drove up to the door and demanded a trunk. On investigation, the trunk was found in the room the ladies had occupied, packed and locked, and a note on the bureau explaining that the birds had flown. They were sufficiently strong of wing and of will to go on a train by themselves, and they had decided that they must have the freedom of an inn at the seaside before they returned to their home in the mountains.

William Allingham records in his diary an unwonted hesitation in paying a visit to Tennyson. "I must be growing older," he says, "when I am afraid that people will not be glad to see me." A subtle self-distrust sometimes invades a sensitive nature when the heyday of youth is passed. If this form of torment ever dares to show its head, shut the door upon it at once.

All the way from Philadelphia to Harrisburg an elderly lady, traveling by herself, was occupied with very pleasant thoughts. Her fellow passen-

gers occasionally glanced with interest at her sweet face, framed in soft falling waves of silver hair. She had a lovely old-fashioned look, reminding one of the flowers in grandmother's garden, white day lilies, four o'clocks, phlox, and rose-geraniums. Not, of course, that she bore resemblance to any flower, plump as she was, and quietly dressed in soft gray. She had the air of a woman to whom life had been kind, and who had been accustomed to accept courteous attention from every one she met, yet she had the sweetness of a flower in her gentle personality. To the conductor, the porter, and the boy who sold books on the train, she spoke in friendly tones, and they responded to her gracious civility as men on the road are sure to do when politely addressed.

Once in awhile the ghost of a smile flitted over her face, sometimes a smile of amusement, and, again, a smile of recollection. This trip evidently meant to her more than an ordinary railway journey, although she had the manner of one who had seen much of the world and visited many lands. When the train pulled into the station at Harrisburg, the porter picked up her bag and carried it to the door of the car, helping her to alight as if she had been a queen, and it was not

merely the gratuity she slipped into his hand that won for her his careful aid.

Every one knows how speedily the passengers disappear after leaving a train, and only a few seconds passed before the lady found herself standing almost alone on the platform. She looked wistfully up and down, and then, as no one advanced to meet her, she stepped into the waiting-room, and took a seat. She had not observed, as she left the train, a woman of her own age, on the watch for some one. She also, with a look of vague disappointment, presently left the platform and stepped into the waiting room. The second lady was a contrast to the first. She was small, thin, dark-eyed, and had an eager expression, while her movements were rapid and darting, like those of a bird.

Before many minutes, the only two people in the large waiting-room were these ladies. The windows of the ticket-agents had been closed, and the two elderly women surveyed one another as if both had been castaways on a desert island. Presently, with a quick change of expression and a step like that of a girl, the little woman in black, she of the thin face and dark eyes, crossed the space between them and rushed to the other, ex-

tending both hands, "Why, Laura, I do believe it is you. How stupid of me. I have been thinking all the morning, and for days, of the Laura who went to school with me. I entirely forgot that people change in fifty years. Now that I look at you, I can see the girl I used to know. You did not recognize me at the first glance, so we are even. We must have passed one another on the platform. How stupid of me, and how funny."

"Jane," said the other, laughing too, and brushing away a quick tear, "I shall have to kiss you right here. Fortunately, my granddaughters are not around to tell me it isn't good form to kiss in public. It sounds absurd, but I have been living in a dream of the past, just as you have, and I entirely overlooked the impertinence of Time. I altogether forgot that not two girls, but two grandmothers were to have a visit together. Think of it, after fifty years."

Neither had realized, as she looked in the glass day by day, that she had felt the transformation of Time. Neither had understood how surely and imperceptiby that great artist does his work, so that, though one may remain beautiful from youth to age, yet the beauty of youth and the beauty of age are so distinct in type and so perfectly in con-

trast that we realize the subtle differences most certainly when we glance at the photographs taken at sixteen, thirty-five, at fifty, and at seventy.

One day in the spring I had as my guest, in the afternoon, a most attractive and agreeable woman. My friend brought with her that day a charming young daughter, and she took from her hand-bag a package of photographs that were more suggestive to me than she could possibly imagine. The lady had been brought up in Virginia, and upon her marriage had gone to reside in a distant southwestern state. She was a matron in the sunny Indian Summer of life, not an hour past the meridian.

As she showed me the pictures one by one, she said, pointing to a jolly little chap of three, chubby and dimpled, and bewitching, as babies are, "This son is Judge So-and-So," naming the highest judicial office in his state. To this eminence that baby boy had attained, and his mother mentioned the fact as if it were the merest commonplace.

Showing me another picture, this time that of a boy a little older, she tranquilly mentioned that he was in charge of a great manufacturing interest. "My boys are scattered," she said, as she told me of each successful man in turn, "but they are

all doing well, and their father and I have no reason to be ashamed of them." The impression left was of the quiet and inevitable influence the home of these children had exerted upon their character.

"They are doing well," the mother said. No wonder. The home had done well by them. This woman was low-voiced, keen-witted, mirthful, and not in the least aggressive. Still, as I talked with her, I knew that in her nature there was the strength of steel, and that her principles and convictions, whatever they were, could not be easily shaken. She had mothered her boys, and would mother them to the end of their days.

When the little girl had come into the home, the boys had named her, and I was much entertained to hear about the discussions pro and con as to the daughter's name. It could not be this or that, because one son had known a girl bearing a suggested name, and did not want his sister to remind him of her. It could not be the other, though the mother fancied it, because a second son decided that sister would not like it when she grew up, and so on. Through various notes of approval and disapproval, the discussion had wavered, and been tossed back and forth, until the boys had

finally agreed upon the name which suited them and entirely suited the pretty young girl, who modestly spoke, now and then, when her mother and I gave her a chance.

I thought that evening, after my guests had gone, of the sheaves Time brings to woman when she reaches the period of harvesting. A mother is busy enough when her little children are around her, one golden head only a step higher than the next, and the cooing baby in the cradle only a trifle more helpless than the boy next older, who is walking and talking.

She is then so busy that it does not occur to her to dwell with much emphasis on her own moods, her ways of speech, her patience, or her transient discouragement. She is busy, that is all. "To bear, to nurse, to rear," Jean Ingelow put it in a single line. That is the mother's office when the children are little.

Time, the enchanter, is busy too, and before any one is aware how it is happening the children are young people, upon whose individuality the mother has set an ineffaceable hall-mark, and with incredible swiftness the years tumble one upon another like waves in a mill-race, and, lo! the children are grown, and are out in the world.

Have we not seen something very like this in the lives of the birds? They come to our eaves in the spring, and we see them build their nests, and then we watch father bird and mother bird later on teaching the fledglings to fly, and all through June the trees are full of song; mornings and evenings are tuneful; there are flutter of wing and thrill of joy, and something happening every instant, something of gladness, of warning, or of peril, but something always happening. When August comes the birds sing less. The little ones are independent of their care; the busy, merry, anxious time in bird life is over, and we do not know enough of the secrets they keep within their little breasts to understand whether they enjoy August as they enjoyed June.

For us, however, there is enjoyment all along the line. Time gives as much as he takes. The two friends who met in the railway station have found it so, and in the exchange of reminiscences have been renewing their youth. The little mother, with the sons arrived at eminence and the pretty daughter by her side, has no quarrel with Time. When she looks in the glass, she may be as contented with herself as on the day that she was a bride.

When I was eighteen, I one day wrote a long ballad about old age. I used to write with a portfolio in my lap, and my favorite place for composition was either a corner of the garret or the top step of the stairs.

I was reminded of the intense interest and solemnity with which I wrote of growing old when, the other day, a girl of sixteen gravely said to me, "I am beginning to feel quite old." Girls at sixteen feel considerably older in occasional moods of restlessness than their grandmothers do at sixty-six. One of the youngest women whom I have ever known valiantly began the study of Hebrew when she was seventy, because she wanted to test her capacity for doing something difficult, and had a desire to undertake a little Biblical criticism at first hand. This lady, living to be ninety, was as young in the last year of her life as in any earlier period. Only the physical part felt the touch of Time, in increasing feebleness. She subscribed for, and read from cover to cover, a number of periodicals, kept pace with current literature, and welcomed in her home women of every age, from twenty upward. She did not wage battle with Time; she had no need to fight him. From first to last, Time and she were friends.

I hold firmly to the belief that few of us need to grow old, unless we choose. Every decade has its advantages and pleasures, its dignities and privileges. We grow old only as we let ourselves rust, if we lose our sympathy with the young and cease to be interested in the current history of the globe. When a woman no longer needs to give her time and attention to her children, she should seize firmly upon another interest, and in its selection be guided by her own tendencies, rather than by the wishes of her family and friends. Nothing is more distasteful than dictation to a woman who feels herself on a precise equality with those around her, but finds that she is gently pushed in a direction which does not appeal to her. "Mother would better not accept this invitation." "Mother cannot think of going on a shopping excursion by herself." If friends are coming to dine with mother, Ellen or Nora or Melissa must be at home, to be sure that no mistakes are made, that the dinner is perfectly served, and that the house is precisely as it ought to be.

"If I could ever be left alone for a single day," a woman once said to me, "I should feel myself in heaven beforehand; but if it isn't Katherine, it's Maria; and if it isn't Maria, it's Gertrude;

and if they are all going away, they arrange, without consulting me, to have Cousin Mary or Aunt Sophia come for a casual visit, just as if I did not see through the whole transparency. I shall run away, some day, and give them a chance to play hide-and-seek."

The restlessness of girlhood is unlike the restlessness of later life, but for both there might be a cure, in a little wholesome neglect on the part of anxious dear ones. To the assiduous and tenderly zealous young people who are unremitting in their waiting upon and offering relief to people who are frankly old and do not mind it, I recommend tact and the thoughtful consideration of two aspects of the cases. One is, that experience counts for something as an asset, and the other, that youth is steadily marching on toward age, so that it may be as well for the young to put themselves, mentally, in the place of the old.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, who retained youth in its sparkling efflorescence to the very end; Edward Everett Hale, whose benignant wisdom and humor never suffered the slightest diminution; Julia Ward Howe, as exquisite in age as she had been charming in youth; Rebecca Harding Davis, strong, cultured, and sincere, through all the years,

till the last one came, were fine examples of life's vitalities. There are plenty of people on the stage still, living and working and serving in the ranks, but they need no mention. George Cary Eggleston died at seventy-two, genial as in youth, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, leaving us at eighty-seven, was not old, only ripe.

"What has become of Roland?" a youthful hostess inquired of her youthful husband, whose college chum was paying him a visit. "The last time I saw him, he was sitting under a tree by the brook, reading 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' to Mary Ellen. I heard him say, impressively, 'Grow old along with me,' and I came away." After all, is n't the best of it gained by those who grow old together?

LOVE

When you sum up the year,
  With its glory of leaves,
Its seed-time and harvest,
  Its buds and its sheaves; —
When you get to December,
  You sing the same tune
That 'twas sweet to remember
  And carol in June.

From the day of your youth
To the day of white age,
Through the book of your life
To the very last page,
When comes a great angel
The "Finis" to write,
The same true evangel
Is aye your delight.

There be those who will tell you
Of jewels and gold,
Of investments—a story
Of wonder unfold.
One dividend never
Will fail to impart
The selfsame wealth ever,
To dower the heart.

Let the spring zephyrs blow,
Or the winter winds howl;
Let fortune smile blandly,
Or sullen fate scowl;
From June to December,
What sky arch above,
To life's very last ember,
Life's crowning is Love.

XXVII

IN THE TIME OF BEREAVEMENT

LYING awake one night, I heard the clock strike twelve. It was in the dark of the moon, and the world around me was wrapped in silence and shadow. I had recently lost from my circle of dear ones two friends whom, at one time, I was accustomed to meet at least once a week, and often several times in a week. In the days when I met them so frequently they were young girls, almost as inseparable as two roses on one stem. They were neighbors, and had grown up together, and during all the years in which they had gone onward, until they had reached middle life, they had been good comrades, constantly active along lines of usefulness. To their homes they had seemed indispensable. Therefore, when in two successive months they were called away

from earth, the sense of mystery which enfolds survivors in a time of bereavement deepened its hold upon me. I thought of others who had for years struggled with pain and weakness, of some to whom death would bring a welcome release from loneliness and wretchedness, and then I thought of these two in the fullness of their maturity. Their wise discretion and gentle leadership, extending beyond their own doors, would be missed in many places. I asked myself the question which has pressed upon the human heart through the ages: What is the meaning behind the mystery, how can we explain what has baffled the world from the earliest dawn?

Still lying awake and thinking, the answer came, in the assurance that back of every cloud of sorrow and mist of tears there is the sunshine of a great unending love. Resting one's head on the pillow of a divine and Fatherly love, resting on the will of God, which sees the end from the beginning and never makes a mistake, one can leave the obscurity, and enter a realm of vision.

The household of sorrow stands beside the household of mirth, divided only by the thinness of a curtain in this strange world, so full of life, so full of hope and cheer, so often saddened by

grief, and so bound by slender, invisible cords to the land where there are no tears, where is neither sorrow nor sighing, and where the inhabitants shall never say, "I am sick."

Longfellow's verse comes back in memory as, in any assembly, we look over the numbers of those who wear a mourning garb.

> There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there;
> There is no household, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair.

The experience of bereavement being universal, sooner or later touching every home, none of us should turn away from its consideration. If we have no occasion for present grief in our personal lives, we have continual occasion for sympathy with friends and neighbors. What we need is to receive into our hearts the deep consolation that, after all, sorrow has its tonic of strength. If we can accept it as a withdrawal of joy for a while and can believe that in the sweet by and by there shall be compensation, it will tend to make us compassionate, and give us insight as to the wants of others.

Those who stand outside the pale are sometimes

heard to say, when a little grave is hollowed in the cemetery, "Well, it would be worse for them if the child were older. It is only the baby who has been taken away, or only the little child, just beginning to walk." Little do these good people dream that when an infant dies the stricken mother and the heart-broken father lose not only the little helpless thing whom they loved before its birth, and who has been their constant care, their joy and pride ever since they looked into the little face, but that they have lost, too, the possibilities of the future.

All that the baby might have grown to be lies with it in the bed beneath the violets. The tiny dimpled hands folded in the marble beauty of the long sleep had a way of stirring in the father's heart the noblest impulses of manhood, and their touch on the mother's cheek thrilled her with an ecstasy she could not define. When the baby goes, the loss is as great and the wound aches as sharply as when death carries away an older member of the household band.

In days to come, parents may learn a lesson of thankfulness that the little feet did not have to wander over rough paths through long years. They may realize that worse griefs can befall life

than that of yielding a stainless child into the keeping of heaven. They may reach that vantage ground when they can be sure that, whatever may happen here on earth to those who remain, it is well with the child who is safe in the care of the Good Shepherd.

Who that has known the love of children, and felt the loss of them, has not blessed the memory of dear Eugene Field? His "Little Boy Blue" appeals to us through its marvelous truth to a fact so common and so sacred, that we understand the verses as if they had been written for ourselves.

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said.
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys,
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue —
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

A mother, whose only child was with her a year ago on Easter morning, had no premonition that the little girl would suddenly be snatched from her before the June roses dropped their petals. She told me about the child's school days, her pleasure in promotion, her last Christmas, and her coming birthday, and she said, through blinding tears, "She died before her birthday, and I laid the doll I had dressed for her beside her in the coffin." Even this mother was not inconsolable, for she dimly began, in the midst of her grief, to see the clear shining of the child's happiness in the Father's house. Very dimly, it is true, but she was of those who rest upon the divine will, and as the lonely years pass she will more and more know the sweetness of anticipating reunion.

Hugh Black has said, pithily, words that fit an experience like that of the mother who loses an only child:

"I can sometimes see glimmerings of a light through the darkness: I can sometimes understand some reason and mayhap unbare even a cause: I can sometimes feel the touch of a leading hand: And when I cannot see I can trust, and where I can do neither I can bear."

If the child has climbed to that fair upland of

youth, if accident, illness, a sudden wrench, or a lingering malady, deprive the home of the girl in her bloom and the boy in his fearless ardor for the race, the blow is stunning. Yet, in such circumstances, grieving parents may be reminded that they could send the lad across the ocean to complete his studies, or send him away for years were he beckoned by a business career, and that they could endure the absence with fortitude. They could give the maiden to one who loved her, and let her go with him to the ends of the earth, knowing that they might not see her again for years. This, too, they could endure.

The absence and loneliness caused by death may be briefer for middle-aged parents than the absence and loneliness caused by the every-day changes of earth. If only bereaved parents can take home the thought that, as they stand on the shore and see the ship disappear, they are not giving up their children forever, but only for a time; if they can accept as a verity the everlasting life, of which this is but an incident, their strength will be renewed and they can go on bravely to the end, to unbroken reunion and unwearying service.

Three stanzas of Whittier, who was prophet and bard combined, come to me as with an in-

spired message. Can we not take the poet's creed for ours, and for our dear ones, too?

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruiséd reed he will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

It has seemed to me at times that the household of mourning stands in the blaze of a singular criticism. If those who mourn bear themselves with undaunted courage, conceal rather than parade their pain, and advance, ignoring what they suffer, there are always outsiders who misunderstand this attitude, and accuse them of not being sufficiently sorrowful. If, on the other hand, grief-stricken souls abandon themselves in the depth of their woe, accepting no comfort, turning from sympathy, and spending their time in lamentation

over the dead, they are blamed for their weakness, accused of selfishness, and, after a while, become objects of indifference, rather than pity, to their acquaintances.

The drama of grief has its spectators, and they are not invariably so patient, sympathetic, and loving as they should be. Never mind spectators. They do not understand, or they would be less harsh in their judgments. Be brave, for the sake of those who remain; cheerful and strong, because those who have gone would have you be so, and because the world's work must go on and the living lift their load whoever may fall by their side.

I have never forgotten the face of a friend who came into a committee meeting on a day when it was her duty to make an important report. No one had expected her presence, less than a week having passed since the death of an only son in his early manhood. Quietly, serenely, and unobtrusively, she slipped into her place, and read her report without a tremor. When some one asked her how she could do it, she replied, "Our work must go on. There is no reason in my life that can interfere with this obligation."

When one is so absorbed in grief that thankfulness for the past, and for what it has meant, fades

out of sight, when one so mourns the dead that the living feel themselves in the way and almost wonder if they ought not to apologize for continued existence, sorrow misses its use. Sorrow should be met bravely. The courage should be that of the soldier on the battlefield, that of the patient whose trust in the physician is absolute. Grief should not be permitted, after the first intense shock, so to clothe its victim in a pall that children and young people fly from the neighborhood. The piano should not remain indefinitely closed, the shades should not be drawn down over the windows. A man I knew, in his last illness, said to his wife, "After I am gone, I want this house to be as cheerful as it has always been. Open the windows to the sunshine. Have flowers around you. Go on, just as you have done, with your work and your play, and don't let the children thrust you out of middle age, where you belong, into old age, where you have no business to be." The advice was good, and was in keeping with the unselfish character of the man who gave it.

I have heard a woman say that, until she was grown up, she imagined herself to be disliked by both her parents. When she was a little thing of eight, her only brother, a youth at college, was

drowned. From that day, the grief which settled upon the household was like a deadly blight. Be fair to those who are with you still, and thankful, I repeat, for the joy you have had with the one who is out of sight. Do not commit the far too common mistake of dropping the names of those you have lost from the household speech, never mentioning them, never permitting an allusion to them, but acting as if their personality had been blotted out. For aught that any of us can tell, those who are beyond our sight and touch may often be near us, may minister to us in sweet and tender ways. The veil which separates the natural from the supernatural is slight in its texture, and the step to the unseen life is like that which spans a narrow stream.

In our Easter songs, keyed to a note of triumph, there blend the harmonies of the life that has no ending. In Russia, as members of the Greek Church meet one another on Easter Day, they clasp hands saying, "The Lord is risen." The Irish peasant affirms that on Easter morn the sun turns around three times to the measure of a dance before he sets out on his day's work. The Moravian rises early on Easter Day, and celebrates the Lord's Supper at dawn.

We who are Christians should meet Easter with gladness, accepting it as a pledge that the brief life here is but the doorway to the life where there are no partings. If we have had feuds, let us be done with them in the light of the Lord's Easter. They shrink to insignificance in the splendor of the resurrection morn. Let the memory of our cherished dead incite us to penitence, pardon, and peace in our intercourse with the living. The best way to remember our dead is not to expend great sums on their graves, but to do something to brighten up the world for the living. The rich may endow a hospital room or bed, or found a scholarship. People of limited means may devote to some living child or aged pensioner a part, at least, of the income they would have expended had the one who has left them remained here.

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

Comfort one another;
For the way is growing dreary,
The feet are often weary,
And the heart is very sad.
There is heavy burden-bearing,
When it seems that none are caring;
And we half forget that ever we were glad.

CENTRAL RESERVE

Comfort one another;
With the hand-clasp close and tender,
With the sweetness love can render,
And the look of friendly eyes.
Do not wait with grace unspoken,
While life's daily bread is broken;
Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies.

Comfort one another;
There are words of music ringing
Down the ages, sweet as singing
Of the happy choirs above.
Ransomed saint and mighty angel
Lift the grand deep-voiced evangel,
Where forever they are praising the eternal love.

Comfort one another;
By the hope of Him who sought us
In our peril — Him who bought us,
Paying with His precious blood;
By the faith that will not alter,
Trusting strength that will not falter,
Leaning on the One divinely good.

Comfort one another;
Let the grave-gloom lie behind you,
While the Spirit's words remind you
Of the home beyond the tomb.
Where no more is pain or parting,
Fever's flush or tear-drop starting,
But the presence of the Lord, and for
all His people room.

XXVIII

SUNDAY—VISITING THE SICK—THE CHILDREN

DO WE think as we ought of the weekly opportunity for home happiness conferred upon us, by the Father in heaven, in the day of rest? One day in seven is set apart by the direct command of the Creator, for rest, recreation, and the rebuilding of strength and health. It has been proved that the cessation of labor one day in seven means longer life and better work for horses and cattle, and prevents machinery and tools from wearing out so rapidly as when used without a single break. For the more delicate machinery of the human body and the exquisite involutions of the human brain the seventh-day rest from labor is imperative.

In the time of the French Revolution there were those who thought themselves wiser than the

Lord, and they therefore set aside the seventh day in favor of a tenth day, as a day of rest from labor. They were compelled by results to return to the seventh day. Holy day and holiday are very close together, in the reality of our home life. Our great holidays are all hallowed, and our weekly holy day, our Sunday, is sweet beyond words, because father stays at home with the children, mother is not busy with her needle, there are no troublesome committee meetings, the house wears an aspect of pleasure, the church and the Sunday-school are delightful privileges, and an air of contentment over-broods the household. The Sunday dinner is better, more joyous, and less hurried, than the dinners of the week. Let me suggest that a large part of the Sunday dinner ought always to be planned and, if possible, prepared on Saturday, so that Sunday may not be the hardest day of the week, either for mistress or maids—nor a strain on the family digestion.

In a widely read story there is a little sermon which might be printed and scattered broadcast. The mother could not join in the singing in church when the pastor gave out, "Oh, Day of Rest and Gladness," because her Sunday morning had tired her to exhaustion, and she was dreading what she

had to do when she drove home and faced the remainder of the day.

By judicious management, Sunday may be made easy and pleasant for everyone under the roof. It should literally be Sun-day, pervaded by sunshine through its swiftly gliding hours. Sunday afternoon is a time for story-telling, cheerfulness, walks, and doing whatever will best unstring the bent bow, rest the wearied nerves, refresh and invigorate soul and body. It is the time to visit a neighbor who is ill, to give a cordial, welcoming hand to the intimate friend. It is a time for the business man to fraternize with his oldest boy, to make a comrade of him, and learn what the boy's thoughts are, and what his secret ambition. Never should Sunday afternoon, or any part of the blissful day, be suffered to relapse into stiffness, gloom, and austerity. That Sabbath-keeping which puts all the emphasis on repression and prohibition is the greatest of mistakes. This is really the Lord's home day.

Notwithstanding an impression to the contrary, on the part of parents, few children find it a burden to go to church. Children enjoy the decorum, they love the organ music and the singing of the choir, and although they may not understand the

prayers, responses, and sermon, a great deal sifts into their minds and remains there, bearing good fruit in later days.

If our churches are to do the good in the community which they stand for, the boys and girls must begin church attendance, as part of their education, as important a part as their attendance at school during the week. Many pastors preach a little sermon to the children. This is especially a happy thought, and when this brief sermon comes, as it should, in the beginning of the service, the little ones, who might else grow weary, may quietly leave and go home.

IN THE SICK ROOM

In acute attacks of illness no one except the doctor, the nurse, and the immediate family of the invalid, has permission to enter the sickroom.

The orders against visitors are rigidly enforced. When the tide has turned toward health, and a patient is convalescent, visiting friends break the monotony of long days, and if they understand the code by which they should be governed, they will be advance agents in the return of health.

Recovery from illness is often a gradual process, measured at first by weeks, there being little perceptible change from one day to the next. No one

should be affronted or resentful if denied admission to an invalid's chamber. When the time comes for receiving calls, the patient is on the road to recovery and, generally, beyond the danger of a relapse.

There are several simple rules to be remembered in paying visits to invalids. Never step into the chamber of illness wearing cold or damp clothing. In winter, leave outside wraps in a hall or another room. Never clasp the hand of an invalid in a chill and clammy pressure. Do not insist on kissing one whom you may love dearly. A kiss is not necessary to show the depth of your friendship.

Do not yield to the temptation to talk the illness over. Gently lead the patient away from that subject, but do it tactfully. I once found a friend, who had been very ill, agitated and in tears because a visitor had curtly remarked that nothing whatever ailed her, and that she might have been up and about the house long before, had she made an effort. The trouble in this special case was due to persistent insomnia and nervous exhaustion, and the blundering visitor only succeeded in giving her friend another push down-hill, to the dismay of her family and the resentment of her physician.

Amateur advice is superfluous in the room of the convalescent. Occasionally sympathy is in order. Sometimes it is well to bring in simply the element of good cheer and a breezy suggestion of the outdoor world. "You poor kid!" cried a beautiful woman as she came bearing a bunch of spring flowers into the hospital room where her friend was recovering from a critical operation, and then with a little laugh and an air of pleasure she seated herself and proceeded to give a droll description of the delays and mishaps she had experienced on her way to make the call.

Every possible obstacle had presented itself, but here she was and here were her flowers, and now, as she had only a few minutes to catch her train, she must say good-by. It almost seemed as if that call had been the flight of a bird through the room, so brief it was and so merry; yet it gave the invalid an upward start on the path to getting well. Visiting the sick is a fine art. Let us ask ourselves if we have mastered it.

I shall never forget the swift illumination in the face of one who was very near heaven, as I entered the door her mother had set open for me. She was one of my old schoolmates, and we had not met for years. A letter came to me one morn-

ing with the word that if I wanted to see Jennie again in this world, there was no time to be lost. I can see her still, leaning among her pillows, as white as they, with the heavy braids of her black hair framing a face so spiritual that it seemed as if everything earthly had vanished, and only a presage of immortal beauty lingered there. We talked together, not of illness, death, or parting, but of love and life, of good times past, and, finally, of our meeting again. To that meeting I am looking forward in some sweet coming day.

THE CHILDREN

When the children rush in from school, bringing with them an impact of buoyant life and gladness as they cross the threshold, boys and girls alike call for mother. They are satisfied if her voice answers them, and it is enough that she is in the house. Down go the books and off run the boys for the afternoon's play. The little girls are more in the habit of running to mother's room to talk the day over, but they, too, should get their share of exercise and fresh air before night closes in. Even in May the time after school is over is not so long as it should be for growing children to romp and play in the big out-of-doors. City children have only the sidewalks and back yards for

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precisely what a sturdy child or, for that matter a delicate one, may need.

To draw the line hard and fast as to food between meals is to detract from the fun of good health which should be the child's birthright. This is an entirely different affair from constant nibbling of cake or eating candy hour after hour, an indulgence which surfeits appetite and promotes indigestion.

Apples and gingerbread, when the children come home from school, will do them no harm and, besides, will considerably aid in making the daily home-coming an unclouded joy.

The early religious training of children is in the hands of the mother. God and mother have the children first. Before evil influences can attack the mind, the habit of reverence for God may be established. During the first seven years of life, an ineffaceable stamp is set upon the child, and the principles instilled in the nursery bear fruit in mature life. For this reason, the mother who postpones the moral and religious training of her child until the child is old enough to make distinctions and develop tendencies, is mistaken in her judgment of the conduct of life, and fatally misses a great opportunity. Little hands should be

folded and held in the mother's own during babyhood, and the mother should then repeat the morning and evening prayer. Memory should not hold a single day in which a child has had no relation to the Creator, no habit of address to the Father in heaven. Before infancy is over, and as soon as little lips can frame words, the children should be taught their prayers. There are none better suited to childish use than the time-honored quatrains for morning and evening:

Now I wake and see the light,
'Twas God who kept me through
the night;
To Him I lift my voice and pray
That He will keep me through the
day.

and

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

There are other hymns and prayers that may be substituted for these, at the mother's discretion. Our Lord's Prayer should early be taught, and so in due time the child's memory should be stored with the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, a

number of favorite psalms, and with the beautiful Bible stories that, old as they are, come with the freshness of novelty to each successive generation. The mother must not forget that her spirit and example are more potential than any words she can use in the religious training of her child. By uncontrolled temper, manifest injustice, or hasty speech, a mother may undo very much that she has carefully tried to do. Through injustice children may be wounded, and even warped for life.

I was once sitting in a drawing-room when a child accidentally pushed from the table a vase of almost priceless value. It fell in fragments at the mother's feet, and a group of guests fairly gasped as they saw the extent of the misfortune. Tears sprang to the eyes of the child, but her mother gently said: "Do not grieve over it, dear. You could not help it." And, drawing her close within a tender encircling arm, she murmured words of comfort. This mother was just and fair, and in that hour impressed upon her child an idea of relative values and of justice and fairness that never could fade away. A mother thus self-controlled can impart religious training with success surpassing that of another whose conduct fails to emphasize her teachings.

THE DEAR LITTLE HEADS IN THE PEW

In the morn of the holy Sabbath
I like in the church to see
The dear little children clustered,
Worshipping there with me.
I am sure that the gentle pastor,
Whose words are like Summer dew,
Is cheered as he gazes over
Dear little heads in the pew.

Faces earnest and thoughtful,
Innocent, grave, and sweet,
They look in the congregation
Like lilies among the wheat.
And I think that the tender Master,
Whose mercies are ever new,
Has a special benediction
For dear little heads in the pew.

Clear in the hymns resounding
To the organ's swelling chord,
Mingle the fresh young voices,
Eager to praise the Lord.
And to me the rising anthem
Has a meaning deep and true,—
The thought and the music blended,
For the dear little heads in the pew.

When they hear "The Lord is my Shepherd."
Or "Suffer the babes to come,"
They are glad that the loving Jesus
Has given the lambs a home,

A place of their own with His people.
And He cares for me and for you;
But close in His arms He gathers
The dear little heads in the pew.

So I love in the great assembly,
On the Sabbath morn, to see
The dear little children clustered
And worshipping there with me;
For I know that the gracious Saviour,
Whose mercies are ever new,
Has a special benediction
For the dear little heads in the pew.

XXIX

THE MOTHER ON GUARD—TWO OPINIONS

TTENTION has of late been focused on a subject once, by general consent, avoided. What shall we tell our little children concerning the mysterious facts of their own existence? There are two opinions as to the propriety of unveiling knowledge that belongs to the sacred and secret departments of life, or of keeping an armor of ignorance as the best protection of childish innocence. Time was when few mothers and fewer fathers were perplexed on this important subject. It was not thought essential to the purity and well-being of young children to introduce them too soon into the mysteries of nature.

A change has gradually come over the minds of many thoughtful people, and the vast majority are in favor of entire candor with reference to certain

phases of physical development in the period of adolescence. When a youth of either sex reaches the delicate and dangerous hour of transition from childhood to womanhood or manhood, there should be no hesitation in imparting knowledge that is both necessary and protective. The divergence of opinions as to when parents should stand on guard concerns the years of infantile progression and the earliest leaving home for the schoolroom.

Personally, I am not in favor of presenting too much information, of a kind that they cannot easily digest or assimilate, to small boys and girls. Reverence for the body and respect for its functions, modest and sensitive habits of thought and behavior, should be inculcated from the outset. This may be done without burdening unduly a child of tender age, and without awakening curiosity as to sexual functions. If a child has a disposition that is inquisitive, and is disposed to ask questions of a nature that the mother can answer, she should use her best judgment on occasion. There are children to whom it is safe and right to say, "Wait until you are older, and you will then understand much that I cannot explain to you yet." There are other children who, having started on a trail, will continue to investigate and, although very young,

if denied information at home, will seek it elsewhere or draw conclusions that are inaccurate and misleading. What the mother must conserve is innate purity and sterling self-respect.

A safe method—one that may be pursued absolutely with little children—is to say, "Always ask your mother about anything that puzzles you, and always tell her what other children tell you. If you are told a thing by another child as a great secret, tell the one who is talking to you that you have no secrets from mother, and that whatever you hear you will carry directly to her." The child whose mother is a confidante is very safe. Children who are busy and healthy, who have plenty to do in work and play, and who sleep alone at night, in well-ventilated rooms, are in little danger of prurient curiosity or injurious excitement. Each child should have a separate bed, a cold sponge in the morning, and plenty to do. The boy returning from school must have his afternoon on the ball-ground, or, if ball is not in season, must have marbles or kite or whatever else boys of his age enjoy. A sense of responsibility is developed in the lad who runs on errands for his mother, stops at the postoffice, and has a little definite work to do at home in the morning or the evening.

Providentially, in these days the word tomboy is not applied to the active little daughter who plays out of doors with the same freedom that is accorded to her brothers. Fresh air, wholesome food in which meat does not too largely predominate, exercise, bathing, and abundant sleep are safeguards to health and to innocence as well, and the child who has these ought to grow up symmetrically.

Mother-love must be on the watch; but the mother who is constantly suspicious, continually disturbed, and forever probing for motives and looking for troubles that exist only in name, gives herself needless distress. It is perfectly possible, by unwise worry and foolish fussing, to drop seeds into the soil where they will germinate, while the soil should be left fallow.

When the tides of manhood begin to flow strongly upon the boy; when he is irritable without apparent excuse; when he begins to chafe at the restraints that formerly were welcome, parental vigilance may take warning. There are reefs and shoals against which a father may erect a beacon. When to the young girl there comes the rhythmic pause that means continual renewal of health and beauty, she should be aware of its approach; and

who so well as her mother can make her ready for the change which means womanhood? The mother who is timid, cowardly, and overdiffident at this critcal hour in a daughter's life should look back to the days of her girlhood. She may perhaps recall embarrassment and suffering that were wholly needless, and may remember that she had reason to wish that her mother had enlightened her on a subject about which she had been in the dark. In some portions of the country, boys and girls are thrown together when they are inexperienced, when they do not understand their own emotions, and are mere chips on the turbulent tide of unleashed passion. They are not immoral so much as unmoral, and when permitted to wander off into woods and groves, to go on long moonlight drives that begin at nine or ten at night, and end at two or three in the morning, catastrophes occur that eclipse and obscure the remainder of their years. This condition of affairs is more frequent in newly settled and still primitive portions of the land than in the older cities, where the young are carefully guarded; but there are constant instances of disaster that should not be unheeded by parents in any station. A thoughtful writer has said, speaking of woman generally:

Her whole education is nothing but a concealment of the woman from herself. The mother hides from her little daughter the girl within the child. The school hides from the growing girl the woman within the maiden. Formerly maidenhood was considered a mystery, now it is a mystification. In this day of benevolent humanity and saving education, she must, of all things, know the least of that which she instinctively understands; the great human and educational problem of all girl's schools is the rearing of women to sexlessness.

The mother who is on guard may indirectly use means to build up her children in the strength that resists temptation. For the boy, there are various organizations that enlist his energies and cultivate in him principles of honor and chivalry. The Knights of King Arthur, with their passwords and council meetings, their regalia, and the successive steps of their order, inspire boys in the early teens with ideas of chivalry and valor. Each member selects for himself an ideal character, and if he becomes Sir Tristram, Sir Galahad, or Sir Gawain, he emulates the hardy virtues and soaring aspirations of these personages. If he determines to be a modern knight, he may prefer to be Sir George Washington, Sir Robert Lee, or Sir Abraham Lincoln. In the wide range of history, there is a great variety of heroic names from which he

may choose his special hero. A boy who is a Knight of King Arthur will pore over legends of chivalry and saturate his mind with noble fancies.

Equally, the organization of Scouts, in which the enrollment in Europe and America approximates a million, develops in lads, as they grow up, the sturdy qualities that make for true manhood. A Scout is initiated into forestry and learns how to take care of himself in the life of the woods. Part of his daily business is to be on the lookout for chances to be helpful to men, women, and children, and a Boy Scout begins early to be a good citizen.

In the Boys' Brigades, military virtues are fostered and the soldierly qualities of prompt obedience, readiness to serve, and desire to fight for the right are kept steadily in view.

In the ranks of the Crusaders, another popular organization, are found a large number of boys who may later become Student Volunteers, because of a training for Christian work and an enthusiasm for home and foreign missions, both of which are the foundational ideas of this association.

Boys are gregarious. It should never be forgotten, in bringing them up, that ten times one is ten. A mother who sedulously keeps her son from

mingling with his fellows is in great danger of seeing him a weakling when the time comes that he must cut loose from the home tether. The motto of all these boys' organizations, helpful and useful as they are, might be Edward Everett Hale's concrete order, "Lend a hand." They are out, one and all, to uplift humanity. "The right that needs assistance, and the wrong that needs resistance, and the good that they can do," are held before them in flaming colors.

In quite the same way as young men incline to join fraternities, and older men find pleasure, from youth to gray hairs, in lodges and fellowships, the growing boy delights in belonging to a company bound together by ties of common interest. The tendency is observable in the ease with which, if denied the privilege, boys drift into gangs and crowds banded together for the pleasure they can obtain, not infrequently, too, for their own detriment and the discomfort of the community.

In his home, the boy's room should be fitted up with reference to his individuality. If a mother cares more for her polished floors and fine furniture than for her boy's happiness, if she cannot bear a little noise and be blind and deaf on occasion to friendly scuffles and shouts, she may blame herself

when her boy finds his enjoyment at moving picture shows and in doubtful company.

"Six weeks of Jack!" I heard a mother say, when her boy was released from school for the brief summer vacation that used to be the rule. The sigh with which she said the words indicated her dread of Jack's presence, his running out and in, and the incursions of his boy friends during part of July and August. Jack was my little neighbor, and he was a small knight of the rueful countenance when he came into my home one morning. "I go into mother's room and she sends me away," he declared. "I go into the nursery and I am sent away from there because I may disturb my little sister. I go into the kitchen and the cook drives me out. I have nowhere to go but the street, and I don't want to be there always." Poor, forlorn little chap! the son of a mother who was absorbed by fashion and a father too busy to have time for a boy. He grew up as might have been anticipated and was a failure at every stage of life, until in middle age the chapters of his unfortunate story were ended.

A PHILOSOPHER

The days are short, and the nights are long,
And the wind is nipping cold;
The tasks are hard, and the sums are wrong,
And the teachers often scold,
But Johnny McCree,
Oh, what cares he,
As he whistles along the way?
"It will come all right
By tomorrow night."
Says Johnny McCree today.

The plums are few, and the cake is plain,
The shoes are out at the toe;
For money you look in the purse in vain—
It was all spent long ago.
But Johnny McCree,
Oh, what cares he
As he whistles along the street?
Would you have the blues
For a pair of shoes,
While you have a pair of feet?

The snow is deep, there are paths to break;
But the little arm is strong;
And work is play if you'll only take
Your work with a bit of song.
And Johnny McCree,
Oh, what cares he
As he whistles along the road?

He will do his best,
And will leave the rest
To the care of his Father, God.

The mother's face is often sad,
She scarce knows what to do;
But at Johnny's kiss she is bright and glad —
She loves him; and wouldn't you?
For Johnny McCree,
Oh, what cares he
As he whistles along the way?
The trouble will go,
And "I told you so,"
Our brave little Johnny will say.

XXX

THE ALL-ROUND WOMAN

"I MEAN my daughter to be an all-round woman." The mother who said this is a beautiful matron in her earlier forties; the daughter a girl in the sunshine of the later teens. Ethel is a freshman in college, and thus far has carried everything before her with a triumphant sweep. She took honors in the preparatory school; she dances like a feather; she plays the piano and the mandolin, and speaks French with the accent of Paris. Ethel is a rosebud sure to unfold into the queenliness of the rose. As yet she has had no time for education beyond that given by the latest pedagogic methods in school and at home. She once confided to me that she would like to give her largest attention and most serious study to music, and that she did not especially wish to spend

four years in college, adding, however, that mother would not be satisfied unless she completed the course that most of the girls in her set intended to take.

Ethel will go through college with distinction, and incidentally have a perfectly charming time, making friends whom she will keep in the coming years, and gaining breadth as she could in no other way by meeting other girls from other parts of the land, with a different training and environment from those of which she is the product. It will do her no harm to go to college, and it may do her some good; yet it is an open question, if she is to be a musician, whether she need have devoted the four years between eighteen and twenty-two to general study. Would she not, on the whole, have profited more by giving the time exclusively to the art which woos her and demands the sternest fidelity on the part of those who wish to excel in its service?

How shall we define an all-round woman in the American sense. She must be fitted to adorn the station of the American housekeeper and home-maker. Whether married or single, the all-round woman must on occasion be nurse, caretaker, seamstress, cook, laundress, gardener, teacher, woman

of business, hostess, church worker, committee member, and I know not what else. An all-round woman cannot be made by a mother at discretion. She is an evolution, and Nature must take a hand in the process. Therefore, let no mother burden herself with too much anxiety about her Ethel, her Frances, or her Marion. Nature and circumstances will help in the molding, and whether or not the young girl learns how to make pickles and preserves, bake bread, stuff fowls, and broil beefsteak, while she is in the schoolroom, she will certainly acquire as much of this practical knowledge as she needs after she leaves it, sooner, perhaps, than the mother dreams. There is a little divinity with a bow and arrow who will probably help along.

Love and marriage mark the real changes in home life as no other experiences do. You know how swiftly the years have flown since the babies were in the nursery, how gradually and almost imperceptibly the growing boy has changed into the young man and the little girl into the maiden of the longer frocks and the turned-up hair. As the child dropped the fashion of braided and ribboned tresses for the more womanly coil or knot at the back of her head, she dropped a little

of her dependence on you, and began to make decisions for herself. The first time that she really noticed a boy, except as a comrade, the first time she sat out a dance, exchanging confidences with a lad, instead of whirling in the two-step, seemed to you eventful, and indeed it was.

A little while only, and even before your girl becomes a débutante, you and her father, talking things over when you happen to be alone, will remark that Edward this or Richard that is quite frequently lingering at the door in the evening, asking the privilege of escorting the little girl to a meeting, concert, or party, or coming in to make a call. Of course, the family will not efface itself, nor father and mother sit in the kitchen or the room upstairs, that the young people may always have the library or the living-room for sole evening occupation. This is neither good sense nor good form, and we have learned not to do it, as was the custom of people in the benighted days of fifty years ago.

When the daughter is actually engaged, she should take steps toward becoming an all-round woman. Now is the period when she should learn how to save and how to spend money with judgment. One young wife will administer a home in

such a way as to insure its comfort on her husband's salary of a thousand a year or less, while another, ignorant of finance, thoughtless of economy, and untrained in management, will waste the income and bring the wolf to the door, though the man of her choice may be earning five times as much as the other. Teach the engaged girl, or the girl about to become engaged, how to buy her own clothing, how to cater for the home, and how to do with her own hands what she must demand of a maid if she have one. Only as she understands the practical issues of daily life, can she hope for the best results and the highest blessedness in married life. Teach your boys, too, dear mother, to be unselfish and chivalrous. As you value their happiness in the future, their dignity, and the position they are to hold as good husbands and good citizens, do not encourage them in small domestic tyranny.

Some of us hold extreme opinions and others moderate ones on the question that is more and more pressing to the front, of equal suffrage for both sexes. Whether we women wish to vote, or would reluctantly accept the ballot if it were forced upon us, is a matter of less moment than the part we are taking in training for their duty the

boys who will soon be men, and on whom will rest the responsibility of guiding the affairs of this country. Your son in the cradle is a potential voter of the future. It is no credit to any home that it is not interested in politics. Women and men have an equal stake in the republic. Women have the first privilege of molding the men of the coming day. Women always exert an influence as pervasive, as powerful, and as final in its effect upon the character of the men they love, working in the sweet background of the home, as if they were out on the battlefield, joining in the strife.

When we think of Washington, we cannot quite forget the widowed mother, so strong, so dominant, and so loving, who left an impression for all time upon her boy. When we think of Lincoln, we know that in the first hours of his wonderful life a mother's hand trained him in rectitude and integrity. What are you doing for your boy? You surely do not want him to remember you in the days to come as a thoughtless, frivolous woman, without concern for anything except pleasure, or as merely a drudging woman, giving every hour between daylight and dark to the little details of the house. There are notable housekeepers, not a few, who fail as homemakers and fail in rightly

impressing their sons, because they put the emphasis of life in the wrong place. You want now and then to be frivolous, to join in your boy's pastimes, to know his friends, to let his classmates find your home always open to them, while his companions should never feel themselves *de trop*. A mother has to be an all-round woman if she is to make good all the anticipations that cluster about her sacred name.

THE MOTHER'S CHAIR

The century's day had just begun
  When the bride, as shy as a small gray
    mouse,
Came home one eve at the set of sun,
  To reign a queen in the wee bit house,
A wee bit house, but love was there,
And its throne was the bride's small
    rocking-chair.

Time fared along, and the rocking-chair
  Kept pace with the rise and fall of a tune
That the little mother caroled there,
  Slowly and sweetly, rune and croon,
Mother and baby and rockaby,
As the busy and beautiful years flew by.

And the wee bit house was a crowded nest,
  That was left one day for a statelier home,

But the small chair stood in its place with the best
Throne for the mother, whoe'er might come.
Babies and babies were cradled there
In her tender arms, in that rocking-chair.

The years sped on like the waves in a race,
And small grandchildren fluttered in,
The dear old hearth was the rallying place
For a bevy of beautiful kith and kin,
Always, the centre, standing there,
Was the dear little mother's rocking-chair.

Like sifted snowflakes the days trooped on,
Till the mother heard the angels call;
One sunrise broke with the mother gone —
Only to heaven — that was all.
But, O, it was lonely lingering where
We knelt by her in her little chair!

And one of the youngest of all the line,
A gay girl, just out of college, sits
In that same old chair, and, in shade and shine,
A look of her great-grandmother flits
Over her face, so sweet and fair,
As she rests in the prim little rocking-chair.

XXXI

STEPMOTHERS AND MOTHERS BY ADOPTION

IN LIFE and letters alike, hard measure has been administered to the stepmother. The old fairy tales describe her as malevolent and spiteful. The ordinary criticism of the servants below stairs and the friends in the drawing-room approaches to agreement in the spoken or unspoken opinion that, if she never have children of her own, she may perhaps be a real mother to the children of her predecessor. People in general put more emphasis on the "step" than they ought. A woman in whom is a passion for maternity can and does love the children whom she did not bear nor nurse in infancy with an intensity of self-abnegation equal in degree, though differing in kind, from that quality of brooding and benignant love that distinguishes her in relation to the children God sends her.

The stepmother faces a number of difficult problems. There are three sets of relations, all of whom feel privileged to bestow advice upon her, and who are by no means slow in candidly saying what they think of her success or failure. The relatives of the children's own mother, their father's relatives, and the stepmother's people at home are interested spectators, and whatever she may do, she may be entirely certain that she cannot please every one, and that she will displease the majority.

Not long ago I heard the story of a youthful stepmother who, after much hesitation, consented to marry a widower who had paid her most strenuous court. He had wooed her for herself, but had laid great stress on the fact that she was fond of children, and that he felt sure she would be a guardian angel to his motherless bairns. Here she ought to have been warned. The woman who deliberately enters on the career of the stepmother should say to herself, in the privacy of previous meditation, "Am I not entitled to a distinct and separate place as the wife of my husband, and shall I venture into his home without receiving from him the full and unreserved love that would belong to me, were there no children there?"

This young wife found herself taking a wedding

journey of a thousand miles, accompanied by two small children and their aged maternal grandfather. It was not an ideal honeymoon. When finally the journey was over and the bride established in her home, she found herself at every turn brought into comparison, as a housekeeper, a homemaker, and, above all, as a mother, with one whose unseen presence pervaded every room and hovered over every meal. To be a successful stepmother in this situation was very nearly impossible.

There are many exceptions to prove the rule that a stepmother bringing to bear upon her task self-control, common sense, love for children, and conformity to justice, may in every essential be entitled to the confidence and respect of all relations, both in-law and in love. She may be compelled to win her way by patience and forbearance. She may be eagerly welcomed by children who have been neglected and forlorn and lonely since their mother left them. In the case of children who are grown, she should establish, if she can, a relation of friendliness and sympathy. Here she need not claim the place of their own mother. She may rather be what an elder sister or pleasant new friend might be.

The home is sometimes the cloth between the

shears, when on one side adult children, continuing to live in the household, set a sullen battle in array against the wife of their father, and on the other side the wife, endeavoring to maintain her dignity, ignores the daughters who dislike her, and little by little sets their father in opposition to them. A man who has wealth may free the situation from difficulty by maintaining two homes, one for himself and his wife and the other for his children. This has now and then been accomplished in a large house under the same roof, although to the manifest inconvenience of all concerned. It has been more successfully done in an apartment house with a hall or a landing stage between two establishments. Obviously, this course is not open to the ordinary man of limited income. The burden of decision and of gentle and persuasive influence is with the stepmother, and if she cannot succeed in anything beyond an armed neutrality, she still, if she be a strong woman, may save the home and give it an atmosphere of peace.

On the whole, a woman should be very sure that hers is completely the mother heart, before she undertakes mothering as a profession. There are women whose natures cry out imperatively for expression in this direction, and among their ranks

there are those who can love an adopted child or a stepchild as truly and tenderly and bountifully as if that child had drawn its life-blood from theirs.

In a Southern orphanage, a woman, in whose home were already four children, was talking with the matron about the children under her care. "There is a lad here," the matron said, "who ought to have a good home. He is a boy who strikes me as having possibilities of growth and development, a boy of bright intellect and real strength." The lady went home and that evening talked with her husband, who was a professor of mathematics, and asked him if he did not think it possible for them to add this orphan to their circle. They were poor in this world's goods, but very rich in faith, and before the week was over they had brought a lad of twelve, of whose antecedents they knew nothing except that his parents had been mountaineers of Scotch-Irish ancestry, into their family. The boy could neither read nor write, and the professor taught him in the evenings. Before long he said to his wife, "This boy has an extraordinary brain. I never taught any one who acquired so rapidly and assimilated so perfectly." Years went on, the boy grew up, took

high rank as a student, and in due time became a civil engineer. Today he is in the front rank of the world's workers, and in her widowhood he stands by his adopted mother with the gallantry of a knight errant. To the brothers who were in the home before him he is helpful and useful, and to the little sister he acts as a chivalrous guardian, He was an investment yielding rich returns.

In a luxurious home of the city, a little girl of seven was becoming self-centered and arrogant. Her mother said: "Nellie must have a little sister. She must have some one to love, some one with whom to share her playthings, and some one who shall have a claim on her father and me." Search was made for a child who might be adopted. "Let the child be a little friendless waif," said the mother, and as friendless waifs are seldom far to seek, a little maid, three years old, was presently discovered and installed as Nellie's sister. She was legally adopted, and the bond of love between the two girls was as real as though they had been born of the same mother. As time passed, the adopted child remained in the home after the older child had married and gone to a distant land. In due time, she married, but she did not leave the parents who had adopted her. They lived to extreme age,

tenderly cared for and constantly honored by one who had repaid their devotion a thousandfold.

Night was falling over the mountains and a great fire was blazing on the hearth of a farm-house in Northern New York. The farmer had been absent from home for a week and, returning after dark, he was greeted with enthusiasm by his wife and his group of seven children. Settling down in his special arm-chair, to wait for supper, his keen eyes discerned, standing a little apart, a white-headed, long-limbed boy whom he did not recognize. The boy did not look like any one in the neighborhood, his hair being so extremely fair as to seem colorless, while his dark eyes were in strange contrast. "Come over here, my lad," said the farmer, "and tell me who you are and where you came from."

"My name is Bob," said the boy, "and I came from across the mountain. My people are dead, and I am looking for work, and three days ago I knocked at the door and the lady here said I might stay. I have been working for her."

Nothing more was said at the moment, but the farmer's wife explained that the lad had arrived in the twilight; that he was cold and hungry, and had shown himself ready to be helpful, milking the

cows on that first night and doing whatever she wanted, with promptness and capability. She said: "One more in a large family, where there is plenty to eat, is really no trouble, and I like this boy. He tells me his name is Bob. You may find out his last name. I have not been curious. Perhaps he wants to hide it." Bob stayed in that home until he was twenty-one. Then the Civil War broke out, and he volunteered. When the war was over, he returned to the farm and remained, share and share alike, an adopted son without adoption papers, until finally he was able to settle down for himself as an honored member of the community. His name, which he duly revealed, was not one of which he was ashamed, but it was gradually dropped in favor of the name best known in the county, where the name of Sprague was a synonym for all that was best and most characteristic of the Northern farmer.

THE WHOLE FAMILY

The years have come, the years have gone,
  The quiet, softly gliding years,
With midnight melting into dawn,
  With shimmering woof of smiles and tears,
Since that white day the angels knew
Was Heaven's own birthday, sweet, for you.

The little children whom you left
  Have grown to happy-hearted youth;
They hardly knew themselves bereft,
  So sheltered close by tenderest ruth,
When, doubly precious for your sake,
Our hearts for them were like to break.

I often feel that mother-watched
  Have been their footsteps on life's way:
That doors for them have been unlatched,
  That unseen love has been their stay,
Though in our Father's gracious will
Some other did your work fulfill.

And often is it clear to me
  That Here and There are not apart,
That somehow God's whole family
  Have scarce the throbbing of one heart
To separate them; just a breath —
The shadowy, thin, soft veil of Death.

Why should you not draw nigh to those
  Who love you yet, who love you dear,
For whom your love means yet repose,

And faith and insight swift and clear?
You have but crossed the shining sea,
Where all our sails shall havened be.

To you, dear one, whose very tones
Still vibrate in your empty room;
To you, athwart whatever zones
For you are bright with fadeless bloom,
I send my whole heart's love today,
The day my darling went away.

For Heaven is but the pleasant name
Of that fair place our Lord prepares;
Through fleeting ages still the same,
His loving work for whom he cares,
To house, where many mansions be,
At last, His own dear family.

XXXII

THE DOMINANT MOTHER

MANY times in the course of my life I have met this domestic autocrat, who, like the ancient kings of France, never learned anything and never forgot anything. The dominant mother is sometimes sweet and gentle, and speaks in soft tones and uses honeyed phrases. Again, she is sharp of voice and injured of aspect, and wears the air of a forgiving martyr. Yet again, she is frankly and obstinately sure that she is always in the right. She finds ways and means to enforce her authority on her grown-up daughters, her grown-up sons escaping from her despotism only because they are out in the wide world and not continually within reach of their mother's eye. The despotism of such a mother, whether austere in mien or gentle as a cooing dove, has very nearly the same effect in dwarf-

ing her children, arresting their development, and making middle-aged daughters as irresponsible and timid as girls in their teens. Occasionally the daughters understand perfectly that they are the subjects of an absolute monarchy, but they love the sovereign, and quietly keep in the background of their minds plans and desires that shall bear fruit and come to pass as realities in a future day.

There are women of sixty who do not dare to take an independent step while a mother of eighty-five ordains what shall be done in the home, from the purchase of the necessary new tablecloths and napkins to the making of a cup of afternoon tea. Feather-bed tyranny smothers, and stone-wall tyranny represses, and both are undesirable.

When the dominant mother is a young woman, it is she who decides, irrespective of their tendencies and temperaments, what path her children shall take, and unless they are exceptionally strong in will, and exceptionally brave in expression, they do not manage their own lives, but let them be managed in accordance with their mother's fiat.

The dominant mother is a woman of unsparing sternness, if thwarted, or else her tears and sadness and her plaintive regrets so break the hearts of those around her that her children, one and all,

if they stay with her, bear the brunt of her imperious disposition. The married children, leaving the roof and going to homes of their own, are more fortunate than those who stay with their mothers. Frequently one daughter remains, through devotion to principle, and sacrifices her youth and to some extent her individuality on the altar of filial devotion.

The story which follows, with its happy ending, is a leaf from an actual book of life, and I tell it here because it fits in.

The funeral was over, and the neighbors had all gone home. In the cemetery on the hillside there was a new grave, and the long rays of sunset light were touching it tenderly and bathing the white flowers that covered it in a soft glow of rose and gold. The woman who lay in that grave, awaiting the resurrection, had been very tired of the earthly life. Her many years had been full of labor and sorrow, and she had spent the last ten in bondage to increasing feebleness, itself an exasperation to one who had always been active and whose constant habit had been to sway the scepter of imperious domination over her family. One by one, the family had left the old roof, as they married and settled in homes of their own,

until only Mary Louise, the youngest daughter, was left to care for her mother and guide the house.

Mrs. Weir had never brought herself to think that her daughter was grown up. To her mother, Mary Louise remained a child, or at least a very young girl, to her latest day. From her bed or her sofa or the arm-chair by the window, where she sat for hours at a time, gazing with keen old eyes over the garden and the road, and inspecting every corner of the living-room, she issued orders, made criticisms, and scolded in a shrill voice, while quite unable to lend a hand, and gradually losing memory and mental powers, except as the latter were concentrated in fault-finding.

Mrs. Weir was a good woman, but had never been an easy woman to live with. She had passed away suddenly at the last, and there were those in the village who did not hesitate to say that her going would be a great relief. No little speculation went on as to the future course of Mary Louise. Every one knew that she had resigned the hope of marriage and broken her engagement with John Decatur, that she might stay with her aged mother. John had married Susie Mitchell and gone to Arizona. This happened more than

fifteen years back, and Mary Louise must now be forty.

The house without the querulous mother was strangely desolate that September night. One of the married sisters had left her little daughter, a girl of twelve, to keep her aunt company for a day or two; but Mary Louise insisted that she needed no one permanently, and said she would go right on living where she was, adding that she preferred her home and the things to which she was accustomed to any change, even though a change should be easier, so far as work and circumstances were concerned. "Besides," she had said to Penelope, "I shall be very busy."

As Penelope and her husband drove home through the twilight, they wondered what Mary Louise could mean, and Ethan Cuthbert expressed his opinion that, try as she might, she couldn't be half so busy as she had been hitherto, with Mother Weir interfering at every turn and needing as much care as a baby. Penelope shook her head. A mother is always a mother, and one does not like to hear her defects mentioned, especially when Death has so lately set on her the seal of its peace.

"Mary Louise is entitled to her own way," was all she said.

When little Mildred came home, a few days afterward, she told her parents that auntie had cleaned the house and put grandmother's things carefully away, and that she had been to the village and had purchased a new bookcase and a canary bird. The canary was a sweet singer, Mildred went on, and auntie had hung his cage in the bay-window. When Mildred left, auntie was arranging some new books in the new case.

Exmoor Academy opened for the fall term about the middle of September. The principal was present at the rooms to receive applicants for admission and consult with parents during the week before the formal opening. One afternoon, as he sat at his desk, a lady was announced. As she entered, he recognized in her a neighbor with whom he had had no acquaintance, because he had been with his family only a year or two at Exmoor, and she, it was understood, had been absorbed in domestic care and in nursing an invalid mother. He rose as she approached him, and she extended her hand.

"I suppose, Mr. Duncan," she began, "that you very seldom have students who have seen forty birthdays. Unless I am mistaken, Dorothy Betts and Angie Edwards are the oldest girls in the

school, and they are not eighteen; yet I am venturing to ask that I may be accepted as a pupil here. I think I can do the work of the highest class, although I suppose my methods are very old-fashioned."

Mr. Duncan controlled his surprise. Privately, he doubted whether Miss Weir would not find that she had tackled a very difficult proposition in attempting the class work of the clever young girls she had mentioned. No hint of this thought appeared in his face. He simply inquired what school she had attended years ago, and learned that she had been a high-school graduate, and had, with infinite pains, as he gathered, kept up certain habits of study, notwithstanding almost insuperable obstacles.

"I wanted to go to college when I was twenty," she said, "but I was prevented. Unless I am prevented again, I mean to enter college next year." She sighed a little sadly as she concluded with the words: "My life has belonged all these years to my dear mother, but God has taken her, and my hands are empty. I have plenty of time now, and there is no one to dictate what I shall do or how I shall spend my income."

Mr. Duncan was frankly interested. He in-

quired whether Miss Weir was prepared for the comments of her friends and the critical attitude of the young people with whom she would recite.

She smiled tranquilly. "My friends will not trouble themselves, and the girls are fond of me. Thank you for letting me join the academy, Mr. Duncan."

That evening Mr. Duncan wrote a long letter to his old chum and classmate, John Decatur. It ran as follows:

My Dear John: — Since I came to Exmoor our correspondence has been less regular than formerly, and at times I have been afraid that the old tie between us was weakening a little, with you on a sheep ranch in the distant West, and me a schoolmaster in a New Hampshire village. But the tie is not weakening. Absence and distance seem as nothing when the heart speaks. I am thinking of you tonight, old fellow, in the home that is so lonely, and I am comparing your life with my own. Nearly seven years have passed since you buried your wife and child. From the warmth and cheer of my fireside, with my sweet wife and my darling children, I send this message to you. Stop making money, come back to the East, and court your old love once more. I have made acquaintance with her today for the first time, although ever since I came here I have known of her long martyrdom in her devotion to her mother, of her angelic forbearance, and her womanly courage and patience. Mary Louise Weir is tall, slender, and graceful, with a curious child-like sweetness in her face, a face that has the oval shape and the large

eyes that painters have loved to depict in their ideal of the Madonna. I cannot fathom the motives or nature of her ambition, but Miss Weir has determined to attend my school and prepare for college next year. I may be old-fashioned, but I am not in sympathy with this plan of hers, and I don't want her to spend five years that way. Perhaps it would be nothing to me had I never known about a leaf in your life on which you and she wrote *finis* a long, long time ago. Come back to New Hampshire, John, before very long, and see whether your influence will not be strong enough to induce her to alter her plans. She confided to me that after graduation she expected to become a missionary. There is no need that she should wait five years before beginning home-missionary work. Open the book again, John, and erase that finis at the foot of the old page. Come straight to our house.

Lucy joins me in sending love.

Yours as of old,
WILLARD DUNCAN.

This letter went duly westward and was duly received by John Decatur. He read it over and over. Several weeks passed before he answered it. The image before his mind of Mary Louise Weir as Willard Duncan painted her gradually took a front place in his thought, and he found himself marveling whether she would know him; whether she would like to begin again where the story had ended years ago; whether, indeed, he had any right to invade the peace of her coming

middle age. He had never been so romantic as Willard Duncan, and when Mary Louise dropped him, he had definitely resolved to think of her no more. Then he had been too hurt and angry to do her justice and to realize that although she loved him, she had to choose between love and duty. He had been very contented with Susie Mitchell, and was broken-hearted when she and his boy were both taken from him. But Time is a miracle-worker, and one of its most common miracles is the miracle of healing that it brings to wounded hearts.

John looked in the glass and smiled grimly at a bronzen and weather-beaten face and a grizzled head, and said to himself that when he appeared at Exmoor not a soul in the place would know him—least of all, Mary Lou. That was the old pet name. It came back to him now. Mary Lou! He wrote to Willard Duncan that he would soon be starting for the East, but begged him to keep his visit a secret. "I want to find out," he said, "whether the folk at home will remember me." In the meantime, the girls had accepted Miss Weir with enthusiasm, and had made much of her, including her in all they did, and delicately refraining from the slightest suggestion that she

was not as young as they. As she had the good sense not to assume juvenile airs, and as she really took hold of study with zest and determination, everything went smoothly, and Mr. Duncan confided to his wife, in the solitude of his dressing-room, that he was a bit afraid he had written to John Decatur altogether too late. "Miss Weir's ambition to go to college will be a stubborn rival to the old romance, I fear," he added.

Lucy Duncan thought otherwise. "Don't you see, Willard," she said, "that all these years her poor heart has been starved? Don't you see, too, that she has a fine brain, and that, having kept up her reading habit, she is very modern and isn't willing to offer herself for any service for which she has no fit equipment? If you had watched her as I have, when she has held my baby in her arms, you would feel assured, as I do, that love and home will out-balance culture and self-sacrifice. Of course, everything depends on the kind of man John Decatur has become. If he has grown sordid and narrow, or arbitrary and imperious, it would be the greatest of pities for Mary Louise to link her life with his. She has given enough already, and has known enough of tyranny. I want her to be free and light-hearted, and to be useful in the

best way a woman can, while she is still young and buoyant."

"Lucy," said Willard, "you and I have been match-making. You stirred me up to write that letter. You don't mean to tell me that you are timid about it?"

"Well, not timid exactly. I only think we should look on both sides of the question. John may not admire her when he sees her. The old flame may not be rekindled. He has cherished a sentiment of consecration to the past, and very likely fancies that it would be wronging the wife and child he lost, should he again become a husband. We must wait, and I think we may hope."

The waiting and hoping were justified. Mary Louise did not go to college. Instead, in the truest meaning of the word, she became a home missionary, and to the one child born to her she was an ideal and not a dominant mother.

THE WHITE CARNATION

Here's to the white carnation,
  Sturdy, and spicy, and sweet,
Wafting a breath of perfume
  On the stony way of the street;
Bringing a freight of gladness
  Wherever the breezes blow;
Here's to the white carnation,
  Pure as the virgin snow.

This is the flower for Mother;
  Wear it on Mother's Day;
Flower for rain and sunshine,
  Winsome, gallant, and gay.
Wear it in Mother's honor,
  Pinned to the coat's lapel;
Wear it in belt and corsage,
  For her who has loved you well.

The Mother in lowly cabin,
  The Mother in palace hall,
Is ever the truest and dearest,
  And ever the best of all.
In travail and pain she bore us,
  In laughter and love she nursed;
And who that would shame the mother,
  Is of all mankind accursed.

Tired and wan too often,
  Weary and weak at times,
But always full of the courage
  That thrills when the future chimes.

Mother with hands toil-hardened,
Mother in pearls and lace,
The light of heavenly beauty
Shines in her tender face.

So here's to the white carnation;
Wear it on Mother's Day;
Flower that blooms for Mother,
Winsome, gallant, and gay;
Flower of a perfect sweetness,
Flower for hut and hall.
Here's to the white carnation,
And to Mother, Our Best of All.

XXXIII

THE SECRET OF EASTER

UN and shower, smiles and tears, low-hung clouds and upper sky blue and bright, birds flitting to and fro, and the whole world waking from its winter sleep to vivid life—all this and more we think of in the radiant Easter-tide. Easter is the year's brightest time. We may have borne grief and loss, walked in the shadow, and known what it means to "long for the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of the voice that is still." Yet sorrow belongs to the realm of the transient, and joy to the realm of the permanent. As the mists lift before the morning sun, as the rivers run rejoicing to the sea, so the heart responds to the pledge of Easter, and often as spring returns Love learns again that it is immortal, and that the rainbow evermore gleams through the rain.

Easter comes to every home with a face full of cheer, with hands full of flowers, with inspiration, hope, and faith. It comes with a promise of restoration and a hand-clasp of comfort to the household of mourning, and it deepens the gladness in the household of mirth.

To a mother, sitting by herself in a lonely house on a ranch where neighbors were few, came one day a letter from a distant friend. The solitude of that house had been well-nigh insupportable, and the mother, listening to the ticking of the clock and looking out over the fields to a spot where the turf had been broken and a small grave hollowed, felt that she could not much longer bear her cross of anguish.

She opened the letter, and this is what she read: "It is now four weeks since I heard of the great good that has come to little Mary." The great good! The friend who wrote that had so clear a vision, and was so confident that the child had only gone a little way off into a safe, sweet place of health, education, and guardianship, that his words made the heartbroken mother able to shake off her despondency and go on with new courage.

Whittier has well said:

Ah, woe for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees.

The instant that we are aware of the steadfast stars, shining like lamps through our gloom, we can make a fresh start and go onward in the strength of God.

Parents who are grieving over the loss of a child should be cautious lest they do injustice to the dear children who remain. A woman said to me that, looking back, she could remember no hour after she was eight years old when she thought that her mother loved her. Indeed, there had been times in her early girlhood when she felt that she could fly to the ends of the earth to get away from the chill atmosphere that enveloped her home and the feeling that she was in the way of a mother who never ceased to lament the sudden death of her only son. "I discovered later," she said, "that I had been mistaken, and I knew that my mother had really loved me always; but a sort of paralysis had stricken her when Harry was drowned."

A lad made an impulsive marriage, and kept it hidden, explaining months afterward that the unrelieved gloom and terrible silence of the home from which his sister had been taken by death had simply made him frantic. We need, in every circum-

stance of life, to be just in our relations. We need the reminder at times that those who are with us here are in want of demonstration, of our caresses, our tenderness, and our resolute cheer, while those who have left us are cared for on the uplands of God, and are watched over continually by many who love them. Easter should remind us that wherever heaven may be, it is the house of the kindred where are gathered, living and loving, great numbers of those who have gone before us, and whom we shall meet again.

Is there comfort at Easter-tide that can minister its balm to those whose trials are not clothed upon with the royal purple of bereavement? Undoubtedly, yes. The wife who dreads the home-coming of her husband at the end of the day, not sure whether his step will be firm and his brain clear, always on the alert to conceal from friends and neighbors the fact of his inebriety, has to endure a realistic, ever-recurring misery compounded of mortification and fear.

Even worse, though fortunately exceptional, is the dire distress of the husband who has an intemperate wife. The mother whose son is not safe in the heavenly land, but caught in the toils of temptation here on earth; the sister who is ashamed of

and dismayed for a dearly loved brother, and the children with fathers of whom they never speak, are a thousand times more to be compassionated than those who have only fallen under the shadow of the Angel of Death.

I believe that Easter should bring strength and comfort to every heart and every home where there are troubles, no matter whence they come. The attitude of despair toward the poor black sheep of the family is distinctly the wrong attitude. If there be in a circle one who is weak, irresponsible, even criminal, the rest of the family should close about that unhappy one, stand firmly for him, fronting the world with valor, and never for an instant should they abandon the expectation that he may be redeemed. One of the Easter messages is of ever-possible recovery to a holy life.

None can fall so low in this world that divine love cannot rescue him. A moral miracle may be wrought, and from the entombment of sin and its darkness and vileness the victim may emerge rehabilitated. The Salvation Army can tell marvelous stories, true and tested, of these modern miracles; and I am persuaded that every home should, in its own manner and with its own privileges, emulate the spirit of this brave organization, in holding

out a hand of help to those who have taxed faith and patience to their utmost shred.

Never despair of the black sheep; and when Easter comes, with its flowers and music, let it be remembered that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."

AN EASTER SONG

Every face is beaming,
  Every step is light;
All the world is beautiful
  From merry morn till night.
The little streams are dancing
  And flashing, just for fun,
And joyfully to meet the sea
  The mighty rivers run.

And twice ten thousand flowers,
  And twice ten thousand more,
Are waking in the lonesome woods
  And by the cottage door.
To count the Easter lilies
  Is more than you or I
Can hope to do this long day through,
  How hardsoe'er we try.

Every face is beaming,
  Every step is light,
For o'er the threshold Easter slipped

At waning of the night;
And little birds are singing
Like mad, for joy of life,
And all the hours, in sun and showers,
With brimming joy are rife.

Uplift the songs of Easter,
Let none today be still,
When this great world is like a cup
That flowers overfill,
When blossoms deck the orchard,
And boughs are pink and white,
And winds go by, like wings that fly,
From merry morn till night.

XXXIV

OUR AMERICAN THANKSGIVING

THE time has come for a blaze on the hearth. We gather around its friendly warmth in the twilight and are glad to have the long evenings once more, when father, mother, children, and guests enjoy to the full the sweetness of home. We are a little beyond the enchantment of Indian Summer, and Nature reminds us of a matron who has successfully finished a number of important household tasks. She may now take breath and rest. We, sharing her mood, are exchanging the activity of summer for the comparative leisure of winter, and have the impulse to keep Thanksgiving.

This beautiful autumnal festival would not fit in so well at any other season. Dwellers in the country have watched the ripening of fruit and grains,

and today are rejoicing over abundant harvests. Dwellers in the city are not yet in danger of engulfment in the social whirl. For everybody, November is a period of tryst, when the departing summer and the returning winter smile for an instant in each other's faces, touch hands in amity, and thus add to the contentment of the wide world. I like to fancy the assembling of the clans. Nothing is more characteristically American than the pains taken by sons and daughters at a distance to reach the old roof in time to keep Thanksgiving.

If Aladdin's lamp were mine, or if, by the aid of a magic carpet, I could be transported in an instant across the continent, I would make my first Thanksgiving visit away down South. I would lift the latch of a certain door and surprise a little woman who is gallantly bearing the brunt of loneliness that would be exile if it were not shared by a devoted husband and a group of darling children. I have learned to love this woman very dearly, although I know her only through her brave and cheery letters, each bringing me its message of good-will, of mirth and sturdy pluck, each convincing me again of the amazing adaptability to circumstances of the educated American woman.

It is a far cry from 1912, when the immigration problem and the extent of our territory are among the difficulties that confront us, to 1620, when a little group of men and women, bravest of the brave, amid the ice and sleet of December, landed at Plymouth Rock. In 1621, after a year of incredible hardship and dauntless courage, the indomitable settlers, upon the ingathering of their first harvest, set apart a day for thanksgiving to Almighty God. We owe this jewel in our diadem to those soldiers of conscience who crossed the ocean, came to an unknown shore, and stamped, let us hope forever, on the character of this Republic, reverence for God and devotion to liberty.

Gradually, Thanksgiving Day, not immediately accepted as other than local, has become an annual festival, with proclamations issued by the governors of the different States, and, since 1862, by the President of the United States, as a day to be observed, the last Thursday in November being the one selected.

Notwithstanding the fact that our population is now drawn from sources widely divergent, the tendency is more and more to make our people homogeneous. On the East Side in New York, on a Thanksgiving morning, the little children of

Italian, French, Syrian, Russian, Polish, Lithuanian or Hungarian lineage are out in full force, marching behind boyish leaders, tooting their tin trumpets and dressing in holiday masquerade. The free kindergartens and the settlements gather in these children on Thanksgiving and add to their brief patriotic exercises the bringing of gifts, a potato, an apple, a carrot, or some other little thing that the mother can spare, that it may help in sending a dinner to somebody else who is poor. The churches all over the land are open, and the ministers preach, but the congregations are less numerous than they should be, the day having gradually become one for home pleasure, rather than for religious ceremonial.

Foot-ball, so decidedly a popular game with us, though it has its shadow side of brutality, has its final innings on Thanksgiving Day. Great universities compete in friendly rivalry on the foot-ball field, and thousands of spectators, inclusive of enthusiastic young fellows and their sweethearts, of statesmen, merchants, learned professors, and everybody who can get within sight of the contest, meet to shout and cheer until they are hoarse. Foot-ball is somewhat to blame for the lessened attendance in the churches, and for inter-

ference with the midday dinner, once universal. It has not, however, done away with the dinner as a most important feature of the festal day. We still have the groaning board, with the turkey as the *pièce de résistance,* and the dainties and delicacies of the season lavishly prepared to complete the menu.

Family reunions are in order. From San Francisco, from Duluth, from the Philippines, from loitering at Lucerne, and exploring in the Arctic regions, the scattered sons of the republic so manage their return to the old father and mother and the homestead, wherever it may be, that they are back in time to keep Thanksgiving. If the homestead has passed into other hands and the farm has been abandoned, if father and mother are resting in the last sleep, the children still hear the old home call, and those who remain get together at Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving may be kept on shipboard, or in a hotel, or even in a desert tent or on a flying express, but it lacks the real elixir of delight if it be not somewhere celebrated by kindred and friends in a home that has individuality and the sentiment of permanence.

A song for Thanksgiving! to Him be the praise
Who has pledged to His people full strength for
their days.
A song for Thanksgiving! We honor the name
Of our Father in heaven, through ages the same!

Returning in thought to that first Thanksgiving at Plymouth, the contrast between then and now is as sharp and striking as any in history. It has no parallel in the annals of the world. When first they landed on the icy coast, these brave pioneers were forced to live under a single roof, the inclement winter preventing them from building separate homes. Those who have visited the old cemetery at Plymouth remember how great was death's harvesting in the early days of the colony. John Fiske, in his "Beginnings of New England," tells us that when the long winter came to an end fifty-one of the one hundred Pilgrims had died.

Compare the first reaping of the Massachusetts field in the autumn of 1621 with the magnificent crops for which we thank God in this year of grace. Ages ago the wisest of men said, "The king himself is served by the field." The merest novice in the study of political economy knows that upon the success or failure of the crops chiefly depends the prosperity or adversity of the nation.

The cities look to the country for food as they look to the country for the men of brawn and brain who carry on mercantile interests.

Agriculture is back of every other culture. Our debt to the farmers is never wholly paid. Glancing back to 1621 with the handful of undaunted immigrants and forward to 1912 with its eighty millions, we are almost overwhelmed as we consider the phenomenal growth of this new land. We have returns so large that we may replenish the granaries of any other part of the globe on which famine lays a gaunt hand, while we do not so much as feel the loss ourselves. The wheat-fields of the West, the meadows rich with corn, the apple-orchards of Oregon and Minnesota, Michigan and Connecticut, the peaches of Delaware and Maryland, the oranges of Florida and California, sugar of Louisiana; in brief, the grains and fruits that flourish here and there in the broad acres of the commonwealth ought to make us both proud and grateful. The question may well come to us, are we making the most of our vast inheritance? Are we worthy to carry on what the pioneers began?

I was once sitting with a dear friend on a hill-top from whence we had a picturesque view. Be-

neath our feet lay a little inland town, and the smoke from many factories was borne upward on the breeze. A river, silvery in the sunshine, ran like a ribbon of light between green fields. We were in the midst of a restful silence, broken occasionally by the note of a bird or the rustle of a rabbit.

Said my friend, "The difference between my husband and me may be put into a sentence. He is thankful for everything God gives us, and I feel that I ought to be, but am not sure that I am."

We had been talking, as it happened, on the general subject of gratitude to our divine Friend. I have often thought that we theorize a great deal about Thanksgiving, without really reaching the altitude where our hearts give thanks. A quaint old commentator happily says that thanksgiving is thanks-living. To be constantly abiding in the higher mood, where we feel just what we ought to feel, is to attain the eminence of the saint. Few of us arrive at that distinction. When the crisis is safely passed in pneumonia or typhoid fever, and the patient whose peril has filled us with consternation is on the winning side, we are thankful. Then our hearts overflow with such gratitude that we can express it only in laughter

from the devouring flame, v
such moments avowed skepti
to forget their doubts, and
heart's language in great em
that of mingled prayer and p
moment and you will see, a
clearly, that we ought to be m
daily routine, for the jog-tro
road, the work we do, the w
neighbors we meet at the pos
street, and the thousand little
taken as matters of course.

Every little new life that con
a small white sail coming safe
make us glad, whether it is o
a friend. Every bit of good fo
hear, ours or another's, ought

For the days when nothing happens,
For the cares that leave no trace,
For the love of little children,
For each sunny dwelling-place;
For the altars of our fathers,
And the closets where we pray,
Take, O gracious God and Father,
Praises this Thanksgiving Day.

For our harvests safe ingathered,
For our golden store of wheat,
For the corn-lands and the vine-lands,
For the flowers up-springing sweet;
For our coasts from war protected,
For each inlet, river, bay,
By Thy bounty, full and flowing,
Take our praise this joyful day.

Home is the natural objective point for every one at the Thanksgiving season. This is why the stranger, far from kinsfolk and familiar friends, is specially lonely amid general merrymaking. Widen the circle so that it may include at your dinner-table your boy's chum, who cannot cross the continent to be with his own people on the happy day. Let your daughter invite from college two or three of her girl friends to share Thanksgiving with her.

Not long ago a man told me that when first he left home to become a clerk in a department store

in Philadelphia, nothing so touched him as the thoughtful kindness of his employer's wife, who never forgot to invite him to her home on holidays, assuring him that he was as welcome at her Thanksgiving dinner as if he had been a boy of her own.

There are ways of widening the circle without necessarily going into the highways and byways and bringing in the halt and the blind. If there is among your friends a washer-woman who works hard to feed and clothe her children, a seamstress whose earnings barely cover her needs, if there are orphan children in whom you take an interest, see to it that you share Thanksgiving with them, in an unobtrusive way. I say, intentionally, among your friends. It is a barren life in which sympathy is confined to a single set of people, and unless we have friends among all classes and conditions we are to be pitied for our narrowness.

THANKSGIVING

Sweet was the song of the robin,
  Blithe was the hum of the bee,
In the day when the drift of the blossom
  Was light as the foam of the sea.
Then deeply was cloven the furrow,

And gayly they scattered the seed,
Who trusted that rainfall and sunshine
Would surely be given at need.

The robin hath flown to the tropic,
The honey-bee flitteth no more;
The reaper hath garnered the harvest,
And the fruit and the nuts are in store.
The flame hath died out on the maples,
We tread on the loose-lying leaves,
And the corn, that was sturdy and stalwart,
Is gathered and bound into sheaves.

And sweeter than music of springtime,
And fuller of jubilant mirth,
Are the strong-tided chorals o'erflowing
From hearts where thanksgiving has birth.
The songs of the home and the altar,
The gladness of children at play,
And the dear love of households united,
Are blended in praises today.

For pasture-lands folded with beauty,
For plenty that burdened the vale,
For the wealth of the teeming abundance,
And the promise too royal to fail,
We lift to the Maker our anthems,
But none the less cheerily come
To thank Him for bloom and fruition,
And the happiness crowning the home.

Oh, the peace on the brow of the father,
The light in the mother's clear eyes,
The lilt in the voices of maidens
Who walk under dream-curtained skies;
The dance in the feet of the wee ones,
The sparkle and shine in the air! —
The year has no time like Thanksgiving;
A truce to our fretting and care!

Sweet was the song of the robin,
Blithe was the hum of the bee,
In the day when the drift of the blossom
Was light as the foam of the sea:
But sweeter the silence of Autumn,
Dearer the tender refrain,
When the aftermath waveth no longer,
And rest comes to mountain and plain.

XXXV

THE DEAR OLD SANTA CLAUS

I HOPE that somewhere in the house there is a fire that you can see when the time comes around for Christmas cheer. A furnace in the cellar, a steam-heating plant that furnishes a dozen city houses, pipes from which warmth is diffused, registers on the floor whence issues heated air, gas radiators, if you like, and the whole paraphernalia that bids defiance to winter's cold, serve our turn exceedingly well. I confess to a preference for a vast hearth where great logs blaze and blue flames leap, where apples may be roasted and stories told, where children in white night gowns warm their feet before they go to bed, and the stir of home-living only ceases at night when the red embers fade to ashen gray. A fire of drift-wood, cannel-coal, or pine-knots, is a

visible pledge of comfort, and an adjunct of luxury which gives the final touch alike to the home of the millionaire and the cabin of the pioneer.

Christmas brings to every threshold its annual message of peace and good-will. Preëminently the children's day, its perennial charm is that it wakens in the oldest of us dear memories of childhood, while the world clasps hands around a lowly crib which, ages ago, a peasant mother hollowed for her Babe when she laid Him in a manger. The dear old story of Bethlehem comes to us again in the merry Christmas-time. Again the angels sing to us, and again prince and pauper, sage and shepherd, stranger and kinsmen, unite in keeping the world's greatest birthday. This is the year's time for passing the loving-cup from hand to hand; this is the year's time for gaiety and good nature, for doing and saying kind things, for giving and receiving and finding out the best in our neighbors, and tramping down the worst in ourselves.

Wordsworth's incomparable lines are pertinent now.

> Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy;
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy.
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

We are living in a material age. The modern mind is intensely practical, and we cheat the children of their birthright and rob them of poetry in the most ruthless and thoughtless fashion. There are loving mothers who are a thousand times too literal. In their desire to tell the children only that which is true, they take from them truths that defy definition and belong to the realm of immortality. Among these truths is the myth of Santa Claus. I believe with all my heart in the good Saint Nicholas. I have listened for the footfalls of his fairy steeds on so many Christmas eves, and have discovered the tokens of his benignant presence on so many Christmas morns, that I should be the worst of ingrates if I failed to do him honor.

He is the dearest saint in the calendar and the

jolliest personage in fact or fiction, visible and audible and tangible, in the round of the year. The children watch for him, and so do I. When I cease to feel the thrill of the child's gladness at the coming of Saint Nicholas, I shall know myself to have grown old, and not until then. No doubt there are some of you who, with mistaken comprehension of life's underlying realities, are afraid that you will confuse the children in regard to truth and error if you permit them to entertain the idea that Saint Nicholas exists. Why must it always be the part of those who clip the wings of imagination and cramp the soul in its divinest faculty to strip every beautiful fancy of its exquisite attractiveness, and chain every soaring thought to the common earth? For most of us the world will have quite enough of plain prose. While we can, let us hold fast to the sweetness and the harmonies of poetry.

Do not, I beg of you, disillusion the children too soon. Remember that there are unformulated proofs that defy definition, and cannot be compressed into mathematical propositions. Joy is the best and holiest thing we can bestow on childhood. Christmas floods the home with joy. It is a time for happiness, for eager hope, for large unselfish-

ness and—unstinted thankfulness. The good Saint Nicholas is miraculously running a race with mirth and music. The infinite sound of childish song and laughter is heard over the roofs of the land, and more and more over the roofs of the globe. All loveliness follows in his train. Believe in him; receive him, and never, never say to your children, "There is no such being as Santa Claus." Never tell them not to write letters to him. Never rudely break his spell of enchanted mystery, nor speak of Cousin Jane, Aunt Sophia, Uncle Lemuel, or even Mother dear and Daddy, as those who fill the stockings and dress the Christmas tree. Hug to your heart the precious faith of childhood, and refuse to let it go. It is worth a thousand times the perishing gold of material fact.

A year ago it was my good fortune to have a glimpse of Christmas in a home across the sea. The glimpse came in a letter to a friend, and she was so kind as to let me share it with her. She is one of those delightful women who, in the rôle of the grandmother, are as charmingly sympathetic with youth and fun as the latest débutante, one of those, too, who are queenly in their sweet distinction and unflawed serenity. Her daughter in England wrote to her, describing the Christmas eve

and the Christmas tree and the Christmas visit of Santa Claus as the little children had enjoyed the rapturous trio. Shall I tell you about it? Papa himself took the part of Santa Claus, dressed for it, and while the little girls in the dining-room were at the height of expectancy, sharing with Mama the ecstasy of listening for an august visitor, a jingle of sleigh-bells was heard just outside, there was the opening of the door, a rush of little feet into the hall, and, oh, wonder of wonders! the children with their own eyes beheld Santa Claus climbing the stair, his pack laden with gifts for good children. They heard his cheery voice, they saw his beaming face, and by the time they were permitted to view the Christmas tree, the age-long friend of the children had disappeared. Of course, the father and mother in that home had taken considerable trouble to furnish this masquerade, but they did not for an instant regret what they did, nor for an instant were they perplexed lest the innocent subterfuge should mar the ideal of truth in their children. Ah, friends, it were well for us if we could never lose the impression that fairyland and fiction and the dreams that come true are, after all, as I have already said, life's truths of deepest meaning.

Our actual and inexcusable wrong, which unfortunately we keep repeating as often as Christmas returns, is in emphasizing to them the importance of receiving, while we thoughtlessly push to the background the pleasure of giving. The good Saint Nicholas needs a host of helpers. We have made an advance in recent years in the methods of celebrating Christmas in the Sunday-school and the day-school. There is still room for improvement in the individual home. I could tell you of neighborhood settlements to which throng the little children of the very poor. Although they are stinted often as to food and fire, often as to clothing, and always as to playthings and luxuries, these children are encouraged to make an effort in bringing a little bit of Christmas joy to others. The spirit of Christmas is theirs in bestowal of smiles and kind words and gentle acts, though they may have nothing more to give. From homes of comfort children should be allowed to send dolls, boxes of blocks, story-books, toys, and whatever else can give pleasure to these little friends, who will be lifted to the pinnacle of delight when the gifts are distributed. Time was when the Christmas entertainment in the Sunday-school invariably tended in its climax to the show-

ering of presents upon the boys and girls, and the reception of combination gifts by superintendent and teachers. We have learned something much better; we are helpers of Santa Claus; we send to the mission-school on the frontier, to the family of the home missionary, to the Indian tepee and the tenement-room, our Christmas gifts; and as our children deny themselves that they may make other children happy, they enter into the good-will that at Christmas-tide overflows the world.

When the angels sang over Bethlehem, the burden of the sweetest song the earth ever heard was, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." We still have wars and tumults; we have malice and hatred and the evil brood of sin in this world where we live, but the world is growing better, the Prince of Peace is coming to his own, and around the cradle of the Christ-child the watching angels evermore sing the same refrain.

From my childhood I have been enamored of the crystal. I like to hold in my hand a bit of gleaming glass, turning it about to catch the sunlight and watching its iridescent sparkle. A dewdrop shining on a rose-petal has the same clear luster, and a diamond in the tiara of a queen is no

brighter. To me the crystal symbolizes strength, simplicity, and sincerity. The theosophist, coming to our practical West from the dim, mysterious East, asks his devotee to peer into the magic depths of a lucent crystal. Sometimes the man who looks therein sees nothing at all; sometimes he sees visions and dreams dreams. The child sees more than his world-wearied elders, and the elders see little, if amid their losses on the journey they have met with life's greatest loss and have parted with the heart of the child.

Shall we gaze into the pure depths of the Christmas Crystal? It is star-shaped and silvery and unflawed, for it keeps through the ages the radiance of the Star that long ago flamed in the Eastern sky, leading three desert kings across waste and wild until they found and worshiped a Babe in a manger.

In the center of the Christmas Crystal we behold a mother and a child. If Christmas is to bring to us its divine message and its profound meaning, we must see within it womanhood glorified and childhood exalted.

It is half a pity we cannot begin our preparation for Christmas in June or July. I determine, year after year, that I will do this, and I have

in my mind a picture of myself choosing Christmas presents in midsummer, when the shops are not crowded. I resolve that I will then consider the dear ones of whom I think in the Christmas-tide, and I say to myself "when next Christmas comes you shall have leisure to peer into the Crystal, to write verses, to have a good time as a spectator, and incur not so much as the slightest fatigue." I am a bit regretful to confess to you that I have never yet been able to keep these resolutions. During the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas I am as hurried as you are, and up to the very last evening, when it is time to hang up the stockings and fill them from top to toe, to garland the Christmas tree and hang gifts upon its branches, to send letters and telegrams carrying Christmas wishes to friends far and near, I have hardly an hour in which to sit still, look on, and fold my hands.

All this I know to be wrong, yet I do not apologize for the failure, and I do not defend it. Perhaps, on the whole, the Christmas cup is sweeter when we drink it at one deep draft. The Christmas crowd in the thronged streets, the Christmas markets wreathed with evergreen and fragrant with cedar and pine, the Christmas holly and mis-

tletoe are so charming, so delightful, and so comforting, against the background of wintry snow and sleet, that I would not like to miss a feature of the scene.

Christmas is the coronation of December, and December is the culmination of the year. I hardly think that our gaiety would be so great and our pleasure so perfect if we started our Christmasing under a summer sky. There are certain obligations that we ought not to forget, certain acts of thoughtful kindness that would make Christmas happier for our toiling brothers and sisters, and it is in order for us to remind ourselves of these if, possibly, they have been overlooked.

You and I know by experience that there is an immense difference between being healthfully tired and tired to the point of exhaustion. There is positive satisfaction in sitting down after a full day's work and resting, with a certainty that tomorrow morning we shall be able to commence another day with gladness. When something attempted, something done, has earned a night's repose we are not objects of compassion. To be so utterly fagged in body and mind that sleep, although profound, brings little refreshment; to

have an aching back, a throbbing head, and burning feet, because for ten days or more one has toiled from eight in the morning until eleven at night, with only slight intermissions for luncheon and fresh air, is to reach the limit of human endurance. Large numbers of those whose business it is to serve the public have no agreeable anticipations of Christmas. They regard its annual return with fear and dismay. Express messengers, porters, and drivers of delivery-wagons, post-office officials, and most of all salespeople in retail shops, feel the pressure of Christmas as an almost crushing weight.

A little forethought and planning on the part of most purchasers would minimize the labor that is unfairly increased in the holiday season. We need not commence the selection of Christmas presents in June. On the other hand, we need not defer the final choice until the week before Christmas. In the opening of December the majority of those who purchase Christmas gifts can, if they wish, accomplish the task. Every small article and many of the larger bundles can be carried home personally, thus lessening the congestion that keeps delivery-agents of all degrees toiling through sleepless nights. I cannot bear to think

of the youthful cash girls and boys who are employed as messengers in the large department shops, for, though not really beyond childhood, they are not sharers in childhood's joy. As for young women and older ones who stand behind counters waiting upon customers hour after hour until their nerves are ajar and their faces haggard, I have not words to voice my sympathy with them. Many of them have homes at a long distance from business, and therefore are obliged to take a hard journey at each end of the day, feeling as weary in the morning as they were at midnight.

What can Merry Christmas mean to girls with wan cheeks and dull eyes, when driven by the exigencies of the happy season as if they were slaves under the whip of a heartless master? Would not our Christmas joy be far greater if we realized the duty of making life easier for those who constantly minister to us? In the one item of parcels sent by mail, of letters and picture-postals, it is within our power to change the entire situation for people who make no complaint, but whose overburdened condition should appeal to every thoughtful woman.

The Sunday-school is the center to which children and young people converge in our villages,

towns, and farming communities. Weeks before Christmas, teachers and scholars count the days until its arrival. Christmas hymns are practiced and Christmas recitations learned and the program before the Christmas service is carefully planned. Frequently, a school has its sacred service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, following it a day or two later with an evening of mirth and jollity.

The motive underlying Christmas is one of sacrifice, of giving rather than of getting, of spending rather than of hoarding. Wherever the children receive presents at Christmas at the Sunday-school celebration, they should have the privilege of giving presents to others. No matter how poor a child may be, he or she can usually contrive a tiny gift, if it be only an orange or an apple, at this time, and a number of children combining may in this way add to the comfort of a poor family. In schools where most of the children come from well-to-do families, they should have the pleasure of sending from their Christmas tree tokens of good-will to others, and this ought to be the chief feature of the evening, gifts between themselves and their teachers being secondary.

One thing to do is to make every child we know

as happy as we can. Gifts of clothing and shoes and similar necessities will make some children happiest. Others would prefer books, skates, tools, tickets for a concert, dolls, and other presents that contribute to pastime and play. Let us make the children happy. Let us think of friends in homes for old people, homes that begin with a capital H, let us take thought for the shut-ins, for those who are spending Christmas in a hospital ward, for children in the blind asylums and in institutions for the deaf, and for men and women who by reason of their demerit are passing slow years behind iron bars. Christmas is for everybody, and Christ means that nobody shall be left out of its beatitude. Let us read Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol" and Phillips Brooks' exquisite hymn before the bells in the church tower chime for midnight.

O little town of Bethlehem!
  How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
  The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
  The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
  Are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend on us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Mothers understand how happy the children are when their little fingers can make and their slender allowances furnish Christmas gifts. Every time that a child does something lovingly for somebody else, the child advances toward a higher level. The little children in the comfortable home cannot appreciate the forlorn condition of children whose comforts are so very few that an extra dainty on the table on Christmas day sets the day apart from all others in the year. One mother quarantined away from home by scarlet fever, which had attacked a child whom she had taken with her for a short visit, was distressed because her two little boys left behind her could not have an apple, an orange, a bit of candy, or a picture-book, to give them gladness, when all the world was glad. There are homes not in the tenements, but on lonely farms in mountain regions and valleys remote from the railroad, to which the dear

old Santa Claus misses the way. If we have the mother-heart, we shall try to show him how to penetrate into the places that are left out.

THE HARBOR OF CHRISTMAS-TIDE

Oh, the April blossoms were fair to see,
And the flowers of May were sweet,
And the zephyrs of June were all atune
When the wind went over the wheat.
Opal, and amber, and gold, and red,
The trees of the forest swayed,
Till the faded leaves were as withered sheaves
Where the wild northwester strayed.

Then December came, and an isle of calm
We found by the open fire,
For the wounds of life there was touch of balm,
There was peace to the heart's desire
As the children played and the mother sang
That Christmas was drawing near,
When the Star should blaze o'er the pearl of days,
And the smile shine through the tear.

And this was the song on the mother's lips,
And this was her tender tune,
And this was the light that knew no eclipse,
Clearer than sun or moon.
For who that would drink of the loving cup,
And who that to God would climb,
Must unbar the door, and watch once more
For the sign of the golden time.